Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-FIVE • NUMBER ONE • JANUARY 1988

RESPONDING TO THE BIBLE
Fernanda Eberstadt

McCARTHYISM: THE LAST REFUGE OF THE LEFT
Peter Collier and David Horowitz

ON BEING BLACK AND MIDDLE CLASS
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THE WAR AGAINST ROBERT H. BORK
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HOLLYWOOD GOES TO VIETNAM
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MY HUNGARY AND THEIRS
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Books in Review
Donald Kagan / Furio Colombo / Carter Cooper / Richard Brookhiser / George Russell

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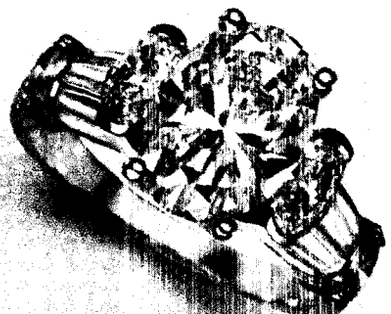

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Commentary

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SDI & the Scientists

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla's article, "How Eminent Physicists Have Lent Their Names to a Politicized Report on Strategic Defense" [September 1987], has been brought to my attention. Since Mr. Codevilla manages to impugn the integrity and the intent of many of the most distinguished physicists in the country, it is my responsibility to respond.

The report was on the science and technology of directed-energy weapons and was sponsored by the American Physical Society [APS], which has a membership of 40,000 physicists. The society feels a special responsibility for educating the general public on issues that have a high technical component. Correspondingly, over the years, it has produced authoritative reports on subjects ranging from solar photovoltaic conversion to reactor safety; these reports have had an important impact on setting public policy. After the President's announcement of a Strategic Defense Initiative [SDI] in March 1983, it was clear that no consensus existed in the scientific community over the advisability or feasibility of a ballistic missile defense. In April 1984, following much discussion, the Council (the elected governing body of the American Physical Society) approved a proposal to conduct a study, on two conditions—that cooperation be assured by the President's science adviser and the director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization [SDIO], and that financial support for the study be found outside the Department of Defense to prevent any appearance that the society had been co-opted. The President's science adviser, Dr. George Keyworth, and the director of the SDIO, General Abrahamson, wrote endorsements of the study proposal, and funding was provided by the Carnegie Corporation and the MacArthur Foundation. The study was conducted with the full cooperation of the SDIO. It was submitted to the SDIO office and the Defense Department for declassification in September 1986 and released to the public in April 1987. It was the principal conclusion of the panel that much more research was needed before a sensible decision regarding the feasibility of SDI based on directed-energy weapons could be made.

Mr. Codevilla, grievously upset by the conclusions of the study, is intent on conveying the image of a report ghostwritten by those with subversive intent, it being cleverly arranged that the report carry the imprimatur of distinguished physicists. The impression that the author wishes to leave with the readers is in total contradiction of the facts.

The study panel which conducted the study and wrote the report was selected by a committee appointed by the Council. The committee was responsible for ensuring that experts from every relevant area of science and technology were included. The co-chairmen of the panel exemplify the kind of expertise involved: Dr. Kumar Patel is director of material sciences at the AT&T Bell Laboratories and the inventor of the carbon-dioxide laser, a possible directed-energy weapon; Professor Nicolaas Bloembergen, of Harvard University, is a Nobel prizewinner for his work on non-linear optics and laser interactions.

The other 15 members of the panel also came with the highest credentials. For example, Dr. P. Avionis is a director in the Air Force Weapons Laboratory and was in charge of the program to fly the first laser on an airplane, the CO 2 laser; Dr. Robert Clem is a director at the Sandia Laboratory, supervising countermeasures activity and other important aspects of defense; and Dr. Tom Johnson of the U.S. Military Academy is an expert in the area of excimer and free-electron lasers.

Despite the fact that many of the experts on the panel have had substantial direct experience with SDI-related activities, Mr. Codevilla states that "not a single one (not even Charles Townes of Berkeley, who shares credit for inventing the laser) has ever worked in the practical field of developing directed-energy weapons." This quotation also contains a further example of Mr. Codevilla's carelessness: Charles Townes was *not* on the panel that wrote the report, but on the committee which carefully reviewed it before publication. The review committee was composed of physicists widely recognized to have

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made contributions of high distinction in the areas of physics relevant to directed-energy weapons. Its members included two Nobel prize-winners, four ex-presidents of the American Physical Society, and two ex-directors of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

Mr. Codevilla's article is so filled with outrageous inferences not based on fact that one can only wonder at his bravado. The author's qualifications were not so well known that he was ever nominated to be a member of the study panel. Nonetheless, he is not intimidated by the panel's expertise and does his own brief calculations in an attempt to convince readers of errors in the report. I suggest that if he had spent more than 30 seconds with each of his examples he might have had to agree with the conclusions of the panel.

The security of the United States is not served by ignoring the technological uncertainties of SDI. It is possible passionately to desire an effective ballistic missile defense and yet conclude that the evidence for such a system's feasibility does not yet exist.

The members of the review panel undertook the heavy burden of producing their long report out of a sense of patriotism and professional responsibility. The hundreds of hours they devoted to this study were taken from their families and regular responsibilities without compensation. Their only reward has been the knowledge that they have provided an objective basis for informed policy decisions. The last thing they deserve is scurrilous attack in the pages of COMMENTARY.

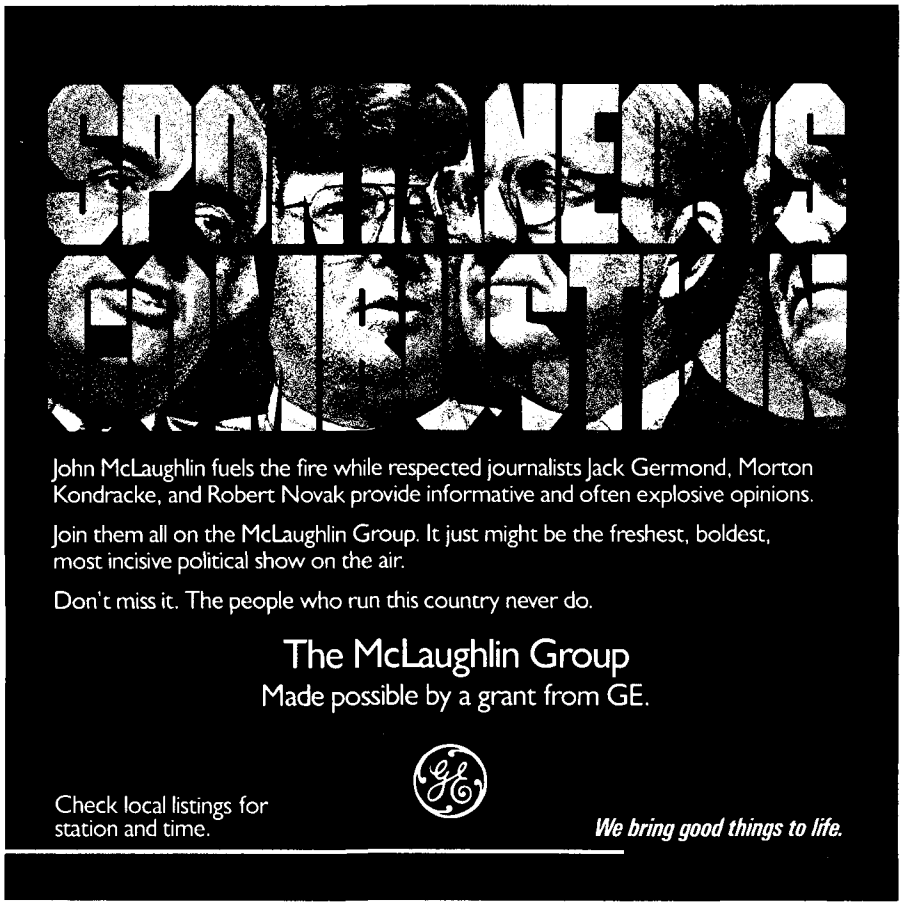
VAL L. FITCH
President, American Physical Society
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a professor of engineering at the same university as Angelo M. Codevilla, I have been active in research on lasers and their applications for the past twenty-seven years. Although this has not included direct participation in SDI, I have in fact made a couple of technical contributions which turn out to be significant to directed-energy laser technology. In addition, although I was not a participant in the APS study on directed-energy weapons, as a member of the National Academy of Engineering, a consultant over the years to numerous aerospace firms and government laboratories, and a six-year member (pre-SDI) of the U.S. Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, I have become familiar with the technical problems involved in the military applications of lasers, with the development process by which military systems are created, and with the nature and the uncertainties of technological advances in this field.

My own position on SDI, one I think would be "mainstream" among my professional colleagues, might be summarized as follows. The usefulness, desirability, and potential feasibility of any form of SDI seem to me subjects open to rational debate and to differences of opinion, though my own judgment, as one not directly involved but possessed of considerable relevant experience, is that the likelihood of any successful SDI system based on existing or currently foreseeable technology is small. With regard to directed-energy technologies in particular, I find the conclusions of the APS study and the supporting technical discussions realistic, sound, and persuasive—and Mr. Codevilla's summary of and response to this report exactly the opposite. On the specific issue of high-power lasers, it is my judgment that the probability of developing in the near future any kind of efficient, practical, and reliable multimegawatt (or multimegajoule) laser which will also have a nearly diffraction-limited output beam—an attribute which is needed to deliver the laser energy on target—is small. The probability that such a laser could be manufactured in quantity at acceptable cost, placed in space, coupled to a very large diameter mirror, pointed with the requisite accuracy, and the whole system maintained in operating condition for long periods of time, fired instantly on demand, and be known with adequate assurance to work when needed, is so vanishingly small as to be not worth discussing.

My primary purpose, however, is not to argue with Mr. Codevilla's technical criticisms of the APS study—though I find most of them either simplistic or highly dubious—but to respond to the primary theme of his commentary: the mo-


John McLaughlin fuels the fire while respected journalists Jack Germond, Morton Kondracke, and Robert Novak provide informative and often explosive opinions.
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tivations of my colleagues who prepared the study. Mr. Codevilla's assertions in this area are so far outside the realm of reality as to demand direct contradiction.

I am personally and professionally well acquainted with most of the individuals who prepared and reviewed this report, notably the two chairmen, Kumar Patel and Nicolaas Bloembergen, and several other members of the study group who wrote the report. To accuse these highly qualified and responsible scientists and engineers of merely "lending their names" to the report is absurd. I know from direct observation that they worked long, hard, and responsibly on it. The competence and quality of their efforts are documented by the quality of the report itself, as well as by the quality of the more responsible replies to the report that have come from proponents within the SDI community. For Mr. Codevilla to describe these individuals as having prepared "a work of ideology masquerading as science" is so ludicrous as to make Mr. Codevilla's entire commentary not merely dubious but ridiculous. The Hoover Institution itself, of which Mr. Codevilla is a fellow, is demeaned by his accusations.

Two minor points. Besides possessing a Nobel Prize, vast scientific and engineering experience, and the widespread respect of his professional colleagues, Charles Townes was from 1959 to 1961 vice president and director of research of the respected pro-military Institute for Defense Analyses in Washington, D.C., [and] . . . he surely knows more than a little about military and defense problems as well as lasers. And several of us would be interested in the specific reference in the Soviet technical literature documenting the operation of a 5-megawatt continuous laser as early as 1975.

ANTHONY E. SIEGMAN
Edward L. Ginzton Laboratory
Stanford University
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I graduated from MIT in 1950 and worked in the aerospace industry for many years with some measure of success. As a result of those years and of my business experience, I have developed a concept of how programs like SDI can succeed or fail. Simply stated it is this: the scientific and engineering community has had a plebiscite on SDI; it has voted against it. It clearly is not a unanimous vote, but a very significant number of the brightest and the best have turned thumbs down on SDI. That is why Mr. Codevilla's article will change very few minds, especially since his harangue on the issue resembles what he accuses his opponents of doing.

I have read many articles on SDI and I fall back on my own knowledge and experience. From a personal point of view, I would not want to waste a career on it. A far less tendentious article in support of SDI research appears in the July 1987 issue of MIT's *Technology Review*, by Walter E. Morrow, Jr., director of MIT's Lincoln Laboratory.

Nothing I have said proves or disproves the case for SDI, but the stakes are high and many of the opponents such as myself are too old and will not be around to see the final outcome. But the opposition is strong and will likely succeed. We hope it won't be a Pyrrhic victory.

The scientists do not always win. There was very strong opposition to the Apollo program. It was considered a waste of valuable research money. President Kennedy's science adviser was opposed. But the program continued over the scientists' objections because the consequences of success or failure did not pose the threat that SDI does. So the opposition, although strong, was not fired up enough to stop it. I was opposed, even though the company I worked for at the time had contracts related to it and to other moon-exploration activities.

On the other hand, the "vote" went against the development and deployment of the ABM. In this case the opposition was fierce and effective both on technical and political grounds. There was no deployment, and the ABM treaty resulted—for good or evil, depending on one's point of view.

I am convinced there is a loose network of people in our country who could build SDI if they thought it was possible, practical, and beneficial at a reasonable cost to our society. Apparently they do not think so.

HAROLD PERKEL
Levittown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Does the report of the American Physical Society contain serious errors that render it of marginal utility in the SDI debate, as Angelo M. Codevilla contends? The answer is clearly yes. Was it written by an anti-SDI cabal with the intent to destroy SDI? Absolutely not. The panel was asked by members of the Reagan administration to examine only certain kinds of weapons; it was given a set of technical parameters it did not have the expertise to question; and in the absence of specific instructions it adopted a vague notion of nuclear doctrine, rather than embarking on an exhaustive analysis of war scenarios. The fact that the panel committed serious technical errors in its analysis is not sufficient evidence of political bias.

Mr. Codevilla bases his criticism on what he calls the interplay of erroneous assumptions that form the foundation of the report, such as exaggerated missile hardness or overconfidence in the performance of a fast-burn booster. Yet how can we blame novices, who clearly learned as they went along, for not second-guessing Pentagon and SDIO experts on the issue of missile hardness? Was it not chief SDI scientist Gerold Yonas who consistently quoted the overblown hardness estimate of 10 kilojoules per square centimeter? On the issue of the fast-burn booster, the APS panel was much more realistic than the Union of Concerned Scientists. . . . The panel said that even with a fast-burn booster ". . . the offense is not necessarily home free." It correctly pointed out that in addition to the fast-burn booster, a mechanism for a much faster deployment of warheads must be developed. It was government scientists (most recently from Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and without providing a shred of publicly available evidence) who told the panel that such a mechanism could be invented. What is an advanced amateur in weapons design to do under the circumstances?

Clearly the panel had to work within constraints imposed from the outside. Therefore it cannot be accused of politically motivated bias. I would regard selective use of facts and internal contradictions as the two criteria for bias in technical appraisals.

A final point: while, by this standard, the APS panel was not politically motivated, the same cannot be said of groups such as the APS Council, or individuals such as the Democratic presidential aspirants, who have been trying to use

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the report to slow down SDI development. If Mr. Codevilla had not burned his intellectual bridges to the APS panel, he could have countered such distortions by quoting from the panel's very own letter to the APS Council: "The report does not, and could not, address the global question of whether, on what scale, or at what pace the United States should proceed with programs intended to create strategic defenses."

NICHOLAS ZUMBULYADIS
Rochester, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla's detailed analysis of the way eminent physicists have politicized their presumably scientific report on strategic defense is a profound contribution to the debate on SDI which COMMENTARY initiated several years ago with articles by Robert Jastrow ["Reagan vs. the Scientists," January 1984, and "The War Against Star Wars," December 1984]. It takes skill and courage to point out that respected scientists, even in the "hard" scientific disciplines, can have their conclusions biased when there is a conflict between conclusions indicated by data and their moral-political beliefs.

Our understandable reverence toward the mental processes of those who have mastered a major scientific discipline needs to be continually tempered by some recognition that even the most disciplined mind may have its faculties corrupted when a highly moralized ideology demands a specific outcome. We already have much data from earlier ideological-scientific conflicts involving the decisions to build the atomic bomb and then the hydrogen bomb that may help illuminate the stresses upon scientific thinking when confronted with such conflicts.

To cite Robert Oppenheimer's position during the debate on whether it was feasible to build a hydrogen bomb may open the door to many other emotionally charged issues about the injustice of his subsequent treatment. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that the major complaint against him consisted of a body of evidence that he had mixed his judgment that the hydrogen bomb *could not* be built, with his moral opinion that it *should not* be built. Oppenheimer's judgment delayed development of the hydrogen bomb until his positions were challenged by Edward Teller and others. In the ensuing struggle, Oppenheimer's shifts from "should not" to "could not" came to be treated as subversion by some political figures who could only understand his opposition in these terms. Ironically, those who charged Oppenheimer with subversion implicitly conveyed their special reverence for science by their inability to believe that a great scientific mind could have its judgment affected by moral considerations, not all of which would necessarily operate in full consciousness.

An example that is less controversial, because a conscious moral judgment was allegedly made for purposes we would all approve, concerns the scientific advice that scotched the German development of the atomic bomb. According to Albert Speer, Germany decided not to go ahead with attempts to build an atomic bomb in the fall of 1942 based on advice from nuclear physicists that it could not be expected to produce a bomb in less than three or four years.

The advice Speer was referring to came largely from Werner Heisenberg, Germany's great physicist and Nobel laureate. It is described in his wife Elisabeth Heisenberg's biography of Heisenberg. In June 1942 Heisenberg was called to a German government conference to assess the possibility of a uranium bomb. As Elisabeth Heisenberg describes it, the report rendered by Heisenberg was a melange of misleading statements, half-truths, ignored implications, and emphasis upon the huge cost and long timeframe involved that would be certain, if believed, to scuttle any major effort. She believes that in 1942, had Heisenberg wished Germany to have the bomb, he could have been fully persuasive. While her account can hardly be unbiased, it gains credibility from the Speer statement and, she says, was corroborated by Dr. Ernest Telschow, a scientist of considerable stature who was head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. If this story is substantially correct, it would illustrate the way scientific data may be consciously skewed even by an illustrious figure when a higher principle is involved.

It would be interesting to consider what might have happened to the Manhattan Project if the major sponsors of Einstein's famous letter to Roosevelt as well as subsequent consultants on the project had not been Jews who had felt the reality of Nazism at first hand. Suppose that this relatively small group of scientists had the shared view that there existed a moral equivalence between the U.S. and Germany, and that in some ways the U.S. was the more pernicious of the two. What advice would President Roosevelt have received from his science advisers? Let me suggest it would have run something like this: no one knows whether this theoretically feasible project will work. We may not know whether the triggering devices of such a bomb will work until it is actually tested after three years of an enormous expenditure of scientific talent, energy, and scarce resources which will absorb a considerable fraction of our war effort. Moreover, we cannot be certain that any of the five possible processes to refine the fissionable U-235 or plutonium will be technically feasible. (In fact, the final decision was to proceed with the industrial development of all five processes simultaneously in the hope that one would work.) This effort, if expended on more doable projects—jet engines, rockets, better radar-guided planes, a fighter with the radius to stay with daylight bombers over Germany—would more reasonably be expected to bring a speedier victory. One can only guess what course Roosevelt would have followed if such advice had been received from impressive figures in the scientific establishment.

The assumption that the other side shares our humane values can also lead to serious scientific miscalculations. The following anecdote may illustrate this point: in the summer or fall of 1947, I was a member of a small group of undergraduates at Harvard informally addressed by James B. Conant, who had taken leave as president of Harvard to be U.S. High Commissioner in Germany. Here was a distinguished scientist, a chemist, and a man of government affairs, privy to worlds of great scientific and governmental knowledge. We asked him when he thought the Soviet Union would have the atomic bomb. His response was that the secret of making the bomb was the least of it. The Soviets might have the process on paper, but to make an atomic bomb required an infrastructure of electric grids and a national level of high industrial technology that the USSR simply did not have, and could not have, for

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possibly a decade. We were all reassured.

Needless to say, the Soviet Union developed the atomic bomb two years later and then exploded its hydrogen bomb only eight months after us in 1953. How had this brilliant and dedicated man of science and affairs made such an error? I have always believed that Dr. Conant simply misjudged the utter ruthlessness of the Soviet system. He could not conceive that a nation with 20 million dead and hundreds of Stalingrads in rubble could possibly divert the megawatts, the manpower, and the scientific talent needed for this project away from appalling immediate needs. He could not believe that a nation could ever let its people toil in hunger and without shelter in the devastation that followed the war in order to build the bomb when it was threatened by no one.

The civilized and humane mind's failure to gauge the relentlessness and ruthlessness of the Soviet system is so often at the heart of our misjudgments of how the Soviets are capable of using their power. When this failure is combined with the current concept of the moral equivalence of the two great superpowers locked in a meaningless struggle while the rest of the world quivers and starves, grotesque miscalculations become wisdom at the highest levels of our society.

M. DONALD COLEMAN
Mamaroneck, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla's article . . . describes one of the latest incidents in the politicizing of science by American scientists who try to preserve the peace by persuading themselves that it is their own country, not the Soviet Union, which is at fault, as did the proponents of appeasement in the 1930's in Britain, who persuaded themselves that the policies of Nazi Germany were reasonable and that it was "warmongers" like Winston Churchill who threatened the peace.

Another example of the new "political" science is the claim that the "yellow rain" in Southeast Asia was not chemical warfare by the Soviet Union, as its victims claimed, but rather pollen feces from bees. One need not be an expert biologist to realize that this is sheer nonsense. Bees eat and *digest* pollen, and their feces are waste products, no more pollen than human feces are ever bread and honey. Bee feces are black, as any beekeeper can tell you. Yet even the eminent journal *Scientific American* published an article arguing for this theory.

J. WUBNIG
Cambridge, Masssachusetts

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA writes:

Val L. Fitch thinks he has written a devastating response. Instead, he adds force to my critique of the APS report.

That critique consisted of a set of examples of what I contended was bad science, indeed of politics masquerading as science. My central point, elaborated in each example, was that the report's active ingredient is a series of wrong assumptions about directed-energy weapons and their applications, from which proceed calculations designed to convince *casual* readers that the U.S. should not try to build anti-missile weapons. I contended that the textbook physics with which the report packaged this active ingredient did not bear on the report's conclusions but, rather, that the scientific filler was meant to impress the ignorant, even as the list of eminences whose names precede the masthead was meant to intimidate dissenters. My critique was nothing if not substantive. I did not try to convey an "image," much less did I argue with the report's conclusions on political grounds. I made very specific charges of willful technical incompetence.

To demolish my critique, one would have to show that I was wrong in at least some of my examples. Perhaps I made mistakes in calculation, or perhaps I misapplied some principle of physics, or perhaps there are some facts of which I am not aware, but which are known to the mighty men of the field, in the light of which what I wrote makes no sense. But does Mr. Fitch try to point to particular errors? No. He charges that what I wrote "is in total contradiction of the facts." But then he mentions no facts. Instead, he tries to pull rank, and leaves the impression that, for him, substance *is* rank.

The closest Mr. Fitch comes to substance is to charge "carelessness" in my mention of Charles Townes as one of the report's authors, when Townes was really "on the committee which carefully reviewed it before publication." I think it appropriate to use the term "author" to describe someone who bears significant responsibility for the substance of a group-written text. One could argue with this usage, but why does the president of the APS find it significant to do so?

For my part, I find it more significant that Mr. Fitch chooses to cite as part of Kumar Patel's résumé that he is "the inventor of the carbon-dioxide laser, a possible directed-energy weapon." I hereby promise to buy Mr. Fitch a drink if he can find evidence of any program currently under way in or sponsored by the U.S. government to use carbon-dioxide lasers for anti-missile work. With a wavelength of 10.6 microns, CO 2 lasers are simply not contenders. If he cannot come up with the evidence, Mr. Fitch owes me an apology.

Is it really possible that the president of the American Physical Society is so far out of it? Yes. For example, I doubt that the 19th-century inventor of the internal-combustion engine would have much worthwhile to say about the applicability of, say, fuel-injected engines for modern off-road vehicles. A humble Mr. Goodwrench might have better insight—especially if he were not blinded by partisan fervor.

Mr. Fitch's peroration is remarkable. He suggests that I should have been "intimidated by the panel's expertise." But why should anyone respect, much less be intimidated by, men like Mr. Fitch who use words like "outrageous" and "scurrilous" without trying to show why the objects of their scorn merit it? Why respect, much less be intimidated by, someone who demonstrates his ignorance of the field even as he arrogantly drops names?

Anthony E. Siegman's letter is of the same kind: he lays out his résumé and proclaims himself an expert. He then lets on that he is ignorant of an important reference in the field: the report of the development of the 5-megawatt Soviet laser in 1975. But he disdains even to use the fine Stanford library to look up the reference, and leaves the messy work of dealing with facts to those beneath him.

Mr. Siegman says that my article is "simplistic or highly dubious" and then "not merely dubious but ridiculous." Yet he never gives the reader even one solitary example of where my criticism of the APS study departs from fact, reason, or just proportion. The reader is supposed to accept his titles in lieu of reasoning, just as he is supposed to

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accept the APS's politics on the strength of its status. Mr. Siegman, like the APS itself, speaks not with the voice of meritocracy, but as a member of a pampered class that claims tenure and deference to its sociopolitical preferences as a kind of birthright.

I cannot resist pointing out the limits of what Mr. Siegman is "personally and professionally well acquainted with." If he would deign to look at *Physics Today*, he would see letters from Nicolaas Bloembergen and others who regret having linked their names to a document whose deep technical flaws flow from a deeper political bias. As regards substance, it would have been interesting had Mr. Siegman chosen to give us his electrical engineer's perspective on the work of the team at TRW, led by Dr. Joseph Miller and described in some detail in the Spring 1980 issue of *Quest*, which has in fact produced precisely an "efficient, practical, and reliable multimegawatt . . . laser which will also have a nearly diffraction-limited output beam." Interestingly enough, in this work electrical engineering has taken a back seat to gas dynamics and optics.

Alas, Mr. Siegman is right on one point. He really does represent the folkways and the collective wisdom of the people in charge of the "development process by which military systems are created." Because of this, the Soviet Union, despite its inferiority in basic technology, will continue to field superior strategic weapons while the U.S. gets cost overruns, delays, and the pretentiousness of Mr. Siegman's class. Mr. Siegman states that my part of Stanford should be ashamed of my article, and implies that his part of Stanford is proud of his reply. If it is, one could only remark on the basis for such pride.

Harold Perkel confirms this point. Neither he nor his friends in the technical community *want* to have an anti-missile defense. Their interests, their priorities, lie elsewhere. But Mr. Perkel is honest enough to say that he felt the same way about the moon project as he does about SDI. Of course, American citizens are free to support or oppose whatever they fancy. The trouble comes when the personal, social, and political preferences of scientists or technologists are wrongly presented as scientific or technical opinions.

It is clear that the leaders of the technical establishment in this country—the people who run the APS, who populate most of the government's scientific advisory boards and a portion of the teaching positions at our leading universities—do not have it in them to build an anti-missile defense. Whether, as Mr. Perkel claims to be, they are too old and set in their ways, or whether they do not believe the Soviet Union is a sufficient threat, or whether they have the kind of expertise that Anthony Siegman has, they just are not going to do it. Nothing is going to change their minds or their habits.

This means that the U.S. will have to remain undefended so long as the Val Fitches, the Anthony Siegmans, the Harold Perkels, and yes, the James Fletchers of this world have the power and prestige they have today. Regimes define what they can accomplish—and indeed what they are all about—by the kinds of people to whom they give the power to dispense honors and money. Ronald Reagan and his friends have never considered taking the public's money and prestige away from the current scientific-technical establishment for a reason Val Fitch would approve: they are intimidated by titles. Also, as far as the Reaganites know, there is no one in American science and technology except the Fitches and the Fletchers. But there are plenty of engineers and scientists in the aerospace industry who are willing and able to build anti-missile weapons. This President may not know or care, but he has the same choice that President Kennedy had when the establishment of his day told him that he should not commit to putting a man on the moon within the decade. Kennedy told the mandarins that if they could not do the job, he would find others who would. And he did. The moon project was done by new men who were picked because of their wholehearted commitment to the job.

One of these days a President will have to get serious about anti-missile defense. When that happens, the prestigious advisory boards will have to be reconstituted, and the names of the professors whose names are enough to bring millions of government funds to institutions will change. Then perhaps Messrs. Fitch and Siegman will have to learn to back up their *obiter dicta*.

Nicholas Zumbulyadis tries to defend the motives of the APS by calling the report's authors "novices, who clearly learned as they went along." But what did they learn? Mr. Zumbulyadis does not say. Contrary to what he does say, the administration did not ask for the APS's opinion. One might ask how many examples of selective use of facts and internal contradictions does Mr. Zumbulyadis want? Didn't I give enough?

But Mr. Zumbulyadis makes a point which my article also made strongly, namely, that the principal cause of the APS report's character, other than the authors' intentions, was that it follows the main assumptions of the SDI program itself. It was indeed Gerold Yonas, then chief scientist of SDI, who consistently quoted the overblown hardness estimate of 10 kilojoules per square centimeter. All that can be said for Yonas is that the Fletcher Panel, which laid the foundations of the SDI program, assumed 75 to 100 kilojoules! It was indeed scientists from Livermore and Sandia, financially suported by the SDIO, whom the APS panel quoted, without providing a shred of evidence, to the effect that instantaneously acting mechanisms for releasing warheads could be developed. What is an honest amateur to do when faced with such nonsense from professionals? He should do precisely what I (and I presume) Mr. Zumbulyadis have done: check into the facts and reasoning, and then say *nonsense!* I fail to understand the significance that Mr. Zumbulyadis gives to the APS's disclaimer, "The report does not, and could not, address the global question. . . ." Such a disclaimer is about as meaningful as a father telling his daughter, "I'm not telling you whether or not to marry the guy," after having produced a report showing the prospective groom to be fraudulent, impecunious, and impotent.

M. Donald Coleman's thoughtful letter makes an observation that may reconcile Mr. Zumbulyadis's protestations of the APS's innocence with my own incredulity: "even the most disciplined mind may have its faculties corrupted" by a variety of considerations "not all of which would necessarily operate in full consciousness." Indeed, the universal experience of mankind teaches that necessity—*perceived* necessity—is the mother of invention, and that nothing so concentrates the mind as the prospect

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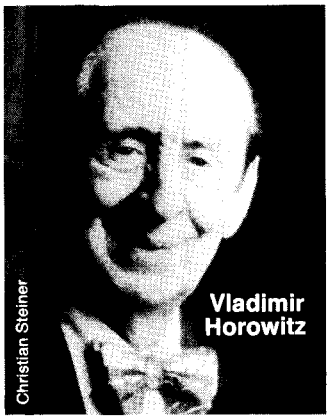

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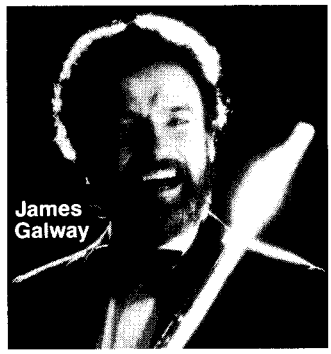

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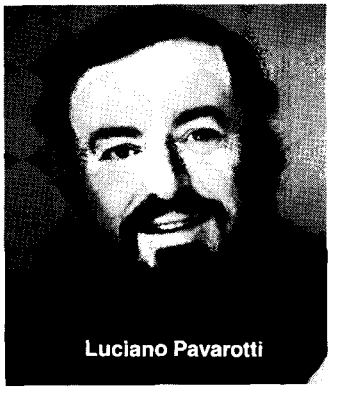

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of being hanged. Whether Werner Heisenberg behaved as his wife and Albert Speer recount, it seems that he was not eager to help Hitler acquire the atomic bomb, whereas the scientists working on the Manhattan Project had the incentive to be positively ingenious. Surely in 1942 the prospects for making an atomic bomb could have been described as far more uncertain than are the prospects for anti-missile defense today. Today, as ever, people can regard the size of a task as reason for attacking it quickly, or for delaying. Depending on their disposition, people can make mountains out of molehills or vice versa.

There is no doubt that opposition to American (not Soviet) anti-missile protection has become part of the culture, conscious or not, of certain parts of the American scientific establishment. The social climate in the establishment is such, as J. Wubnig notes, that it is even respectable at places like Harvard and Stanford to confuse black bee feces with yellow pollen so long as it serves the argument that the U.S. ought not to be so wary of the Soviet Union. The American people cannot change that culture. But they can decide to give unto other cultural types the responsibility, money, and honor that this anti-defense establishment now believes is its birthright.

The Law & Iran-Contra

To the Editor of Commentary:

When I was in law school, I recall that one of the jokes floating around was that the *A* students become professors, the *B* students become judges, the *C* students become lawyers and make all the money, and the *D* students become legislators who enact the vague laws which create the need for all the practitioners, judges, and law professors. The joke is hardly a knee slapper, but there is an unfortunate element of truth in the suggestion that, all too often, laws are unnecessarily vague and an attempt to shift political responsibility and avoid controversy.

L. Gordon Crovitz, in his careful discussion of the various Boland amendments and their legislative history ["Crime, the Constitution & the Iran-Contra Affair," October 1987], demonstrates that what at first may appear to be a ban on any aid, direct or indirect, turns out to be not nearly as crystal-clear as some Congressmen later claimed. About the only thing that is clear is that "none of the Boland amendments included any civil or criminal penalties." As Judge Carl McGowan said a decade ago, a "Congress genuinely concerned about delegated power has one effective contribution that it, and only it, can make—the identification and definition, as precisely as possible, of that power, and of the standards to be observed in its exercise."

However, I do not embrace all of Mr. Crovitz's arguments. I disagree, for example, that the independent prosecutor is independent of everybody. Lawrence Walsh's deputy said that, but it is still wrong. The independent prosecutor must be under the control of the panel of judges who appointed him. Thus if the Department of Justice believes that the independent prosecutor is acting beyond his jurisdiction, or that he should not pursue certain avenues because of foreign-policy concerns, the Attorney General should apply to the court to limit the independent prosecutor. The hearing might even have to be held *in camera*, i.e., behind closed doors. That was the procedure suggested in the original Watergate-tapes case when claims were made that the disclosure of portions of the tapes might affect the national security, military secrets, etc. And that is how I think a court should rule in any case involving an independent prosecutor. In addition, the independent prosecutor should be able to exercise prosecutorial discretion. I thought the main reason to have an *independent* prosecutor is that if he chooses *not* to seek an indictment, we could respect the integrity of that judgment just as we could accept the integrity of a decision to go forward. Walsh may think he has no discretion—Mr. Crovitz points out that Walsh has announced that if there is probable cause, "it is the duty of the independent counsel to prosecute"—but Walsh is wrong.

Ronald D. Rotunda
College of Law
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign
Champaign, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

L. Gordon Crovitz argues that Boland Three was not intended to apply to the President. If the Reagan administration understood the law in that way, then there was an extraordinary effort to keep the understanding a secret, a point which has been made by Robert McFarlane himself. But on the question of legislative intent I am merely skeptical of Mr. Crovitz's argument. My main concern is with his belief that it would have been *unconstitutional* to apply the amendment to the President. He believes that such a legislative restraint could not legally be imposed given the limited foreign-policy powers of Congress. Yet congressional authority is less limited than Mr. Crovitz thinks.

The Constitution says that "The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States . . ." (Article II, section 2). But according to Article I, section 8 it is "Congress" which "shall have power to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions. . . ." This is particularly relevant since the Framers doubted whether a national standing army would be tolerated (see *Federalist 8* and *24*). And yet in an age when the militia was of utterly vital importance to national security it was Congress which was given primary power to use it, even in time of crisis.

Consider other powers granted to Congress by section 8:

"To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas and offenses against the law of nations." In *Federalist 42* Madison cites this authority, then criticizes the Articles of Confederation because "they contain no provision for the case of offenses against the law of nations; and consequently leave it in the power of any indiscreet member to embroil the Confederacy with foreign nations." The purpose was to ensure that a decision to become embroiled with foreign countries would be made by the proper authority—the legislative authority. This does not necessarily mean that the President has no power in this regard, but since the explicit power is granted to Congress, the executive's authority would seem to be subordinate.

"To declare war." Mr. Crovitz says that the President has often "ordered troops or significant arms abroad . . . without any authorization whatsoever by Congress." But this does not engage the real question. What happens when the Con-

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gress states that it does *not* want troops or arms to go abroad? Congress's right to declare that a state of war should exist logically implies the right to declare that a state of war should not exist—or, by implication, be hazarded.

To "grant letters of marque and reprisal." Again, the Framers did not wish any state to be able to embroil the country "with foreign nations," in this case by commissioning a civilian navy. In the 18th century the granting of letters of marque was an important extension of national power in foreign affairs, and yet the Framers placed it under legislative authority.

Mr. Crovitz writes that "Congress has the power to declare war, though the Founders were careful to give the President the power to *make* war." But the question is not whether the Commander-in-Chief has prime authority over war strategy, but whether the legislature has prime authority to *decide* to conduct, or risk, war. Consider what the President was meant to have at his disposal: a navy whose authority to "punish piracies and . . . offenses against the law of nations" derived from Congress; a standing army that might not exist and whose authority to "punish . . . offenses against the law of nations" also derived from Congress; a militia whose "calling forth" to national service was a power vested in Congress (and whose authority to "punish" in the name of the Union must, logically, also derive from the legislature); and a civilian navy whose letter of marque was to be granted by Congress. In addition, it is up to Congress to "define . . . piracies . . . and offenses against the law of nations." If the President's definition disagrees with that of Congress, then clearly his opinion is subordinate. And even if their definitions agree, the authority to "punish" such offenses lies ultimately with the legislature.

Mr. Crovitz says that "Congress could . . . refuse . . . to appropriate funds for the *contras*. . . . But if . . . Congress tries to attach conditions to the spending of authorized funds, such conditions cannot be used to usurp the constitutional authority of the executive branch." It is self-evident that Congress cannot properly usurp the President's authority. But what *is* his authority? Can he, in defiance of Congress, aid the *contras* to "punish" the Sandinistas for "offenses against the law of nations"? But such authority to punish is explicitly given to Congress, in which case why can't the legislature use its authority to "attach conditions"? If Congress cannot properly do this, does that mean that the 1986 *contra* aid law was unconstitutional? The law authorized $100 million on the condition that only $70 million be used for "lethal" assistance. If the President believed that the *contras* needed $90 million, could he have legally violated that condition?

Mr. Crovitz cites the *Lovett* case, but it is irrelevant. It is obvious that the President has the legal right to hire and fire his own staff. It is anything but obvious that he has the right to ignore congressional conditions placed on the supply of a foreign army, particularly when the U.S. is not in a declared state of war. Mr. Crovitz also cites the *Curtiss-Wright* case, which involved a private arms sale prohibited by both a presidential proclamation and a joint resolution of Congress. The question is whether such a proclamation is superior to the legislative will in the field of international relations. Does Mr. Crovitz really believe that it is? Would he still believe it if a liberal President, in defiance of a congressional statute, "proclaimed" it illegal to sell weapons to El Salvador or the *contras*?

As a supporter of the Nicaraguan

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

WINTER ISSUE

Ze'ev Schiff

U.S. AND ISRAEL: FRIENDSHIP UNDER STRAIN

"...among Israeli leaders, and more specifically in the bureaucracy, there are those who take U.S.-Israeli relations for granted, something that needs no nurturing or care...."

Daniel Pipes

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resistance I hold the Boland amendments in contempt. If Mr. Crovitz is right that they did not apply to the President, then no constitutional question arises. But if he is wrong, then the President and his staff were bound to obey the law, and to argue otherwise is to distort the meaning of the Constitution.

JACK NOBLE, JR.
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

L. Gordon Crovitz's excellent article . . . provides a clue for solving the mystery of why President Reagan gave up so much without gaining anything in return. Mr. Crovitz provides an account of how the Boland amendments were passed without a veto by an administration bent on accommodating liberalism in Congress. . . . As it has done with increasing frequency, the administration showed itself anxious to rely on its own very considerable skill at charming the opposition rather than going to the people with a frank statement of its position. . . .

The administration has persisted in a selective perception of reality which makes the liberal Congress appear very powerful. Some data—for example, opinion polls showing that a majority of Americans are opposed to *contra* aid—regularly give pause to the administration. Strangely, what seems much less influential is that President Reagan and Colonel North lead the pack in the race for national hero.

Thus it would seem that while those who exercise preponderant influence in the administration present themselves as realists, often schooled in the harsh world of business, they are actually products of a fashionable university-propagated pop philosophy. They are unthinking adherents of a dogma which Allan Bloom has called an Americanized nihilism of "easy virtue." For votaries of this persuasion, the word "hero" simply does not compute.

Such nihilist ideologizing is bound to cause trouble in the real world created by the American Constitution. The very logic of the Constitution cries out against it. According to the Founders, each of the separated powers possesses a distinct will of its own. . . . National legislation is not enacted by the will of the legislative branch alone, but by the concurrence of three wills, one holding the purse, another wielding the sword, and a third, the judiciary, providing a passive check on the other two.

The will of the President is supposed to be a heroic one, of the kind one man can manifest when he acts alone and is responsible for wielding the community's sword both domestically and overseas. Or, as Hamilton described it borrowing from Aristotle, his will is to be "magnanimous."

But the Constitution's demands are defeated when the presidency is guided by men who ignore heroes, and pay attention only to the self-serving behavior of groups favoring one or another interest. What the administration leaders think they know when they so blind themselves is not anything to which the Founders would agree, but what the anti-Federalists and the apologists for slavocracy thought they knew when they tried to wreck the Union. They believe that human nature operates inexorably to corrupt ambition and defeat all republican attempts to lead public opinion away from parochial bias toward a reasonable disinterestedness . . . [and that] the solid basis on which elections are won and lost is to be found in opinion polls measuring unleavened self-aggrandizement. . . .

The sad lesson that I learn from Mr. Crovitz's analysis is that the heirs of the Reagan revolution devour their own heroes. They do this apparently without realizing that the essence of their cause is to reestablish heroes and heroism in America. They do it in a misguided effort to create a common bond with enemies whose most cherished principle is that there are no heroes. When the chips are down, both partisan camps show that they have despaired of the people's ability to rise above self-aggrandizement, and that they have developed an oligarchic disposition. Mr. Crovitz's account demonstrates that the debacle of Iran-*contra* is the most spectacular evidence to date that the revolution has been betrayed.

DAVID BROYLES
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Underlying L. Gordon Crovitz's article is the assumption that policy differences should not be made criminal matters. On the surface, at least, he is right; the Iran-*contra* investigations should not focus on violations of a very technical, somewhat vague, law.

Mr. Crovitz, however, seems to have missed the real theme of the whole "scandal." From all points of view, sending Iranian money to the *contras* was a secondary issue. It was a side effort that developed out of a bad policy initiative (which failed): selling arms to Iran as a bribe to gain the release of American hostages.

At best, dealing with the Iranians was a hypocritical violation of administration promises never to deal with terrorists. At worst, this bad idea was an arrogant usurpation by members of the executive branch—not even the President—of Congress's foreign-policy powers and power to appropriate money. Moreover, those who carried out this policy doubted Congress's motivation and patriotism, not just its judgment and ability.

What is most striking about the actions and statements of those most heavily involved was their total conviction that they were the only ones who could define patriotism. People who held different views were not just in disagreement, they were disloyal. Colonel North, Admiral Poindexter, and their associates forgot that patriotism is not an absolute. . . . Deciding what constitutes patriotism, what is in the national interest, is open to the interpretation and judgment of many. No one view of the American national interest is necessarily the "correct" view.

Mr. Crovitz is right in saying that ". . . criminalizing policy differences guarantees cowardice and even paralysis in the executive branch . . . ," a process every bit as damaging as equating policy differences with disloyalty.

BRUCE BRAGER
Arlington, Virginia

L. GORDON CROVITZ writes:

Ronald D. Rotunda is correct that independent counsels are not supposed to be "independent of everybody." As a matter of law, Lawrence Walsh is supposed to have some supervision, but my point was that as a matter of political reality, he and the other independent counsels are loose cannons. The Ethics in Government Act gave special prosecutors unfettered discretion when the position was first created in 1978. The law instructed these counsels to follow the precedents and established Justice Department policies concerning whom to prosecute for what activities "to the extent the special prosecutor deems appropriate."

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Even Congress realized by 1982 that this gave these counsels too much independence. The law was amended to order that these counsels "shall, except when not possible, comply with the written or other established policies of the Department of Justice respecting enforcement of the criminal laws."

Lawrence Walsh is already in violation of this instruction. He forced *contra* fundraisers Carl Channell and Richard Miller to plead guilty to a tax charge that the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service have dismissed as failing to establish any crime. Walsh has also misstated the concept of prosecutorial discretion. He said in a speech to the American Bar Association that if his investigation finds "probable cause that a crime has been committed, it is the duty of the independent counsel to prosecute." The official Justice Department guidelines for federal prosecutors say that probable cause "is, of course, a threshold consideration only. Merely because this requirement can be met in a given case does not automatically warrant prosecution." Other factors prosecutors must consider include whether criminal prosecution is the most appropriate remedy for crimes and whether the potential defendants are likely to repeat the alleged offenses.

The Ethics in Government Act empowers the Attorney General to remove independent counsels for "good cause." This is a vague term of legal art, but must include independent counsels who willfully ignore established Justice Department policies. The reason Edwin Meese has not removed Walsh (or the other errant independent counsels) is that the political heat would be enormous. In our system of separation of powers, no executive-branch official should have to endure such political pressures in order to control the core executive function of prosecuting individuals.

Jack Noble, Jr. restates the post-Vietnam, revisionist view of what the Constitution says about foreign policy. History and the Constitution defy this view.

Presidents from 1798 to 1970 have engaged the country in hostilities or sent arms to allies some 200 times while Congress has declared war five times. In two-thirds of the cases of unilateral uses of force, the President acted alone without any treaties or appropriations to indicate congressional acquiescence. On several of these occasions, Congress had expressly indicated that it opposed military action. Jefferson dispatched the Navy to deal with the Barbary Pirates without even informing Congress until six months after the hostilities. Franklin Roosevelt transferred battleships to the British despite the Neutrality Act. Indeed, the practical necessity of taking action without the approval of legislators has caused each President to act first and inform Congress only after the fact.

Congress does have the power of the purse, and could decide not to fund any armed forces at all. There is little the President could do in such a case. However, Congress does not use its funding power this

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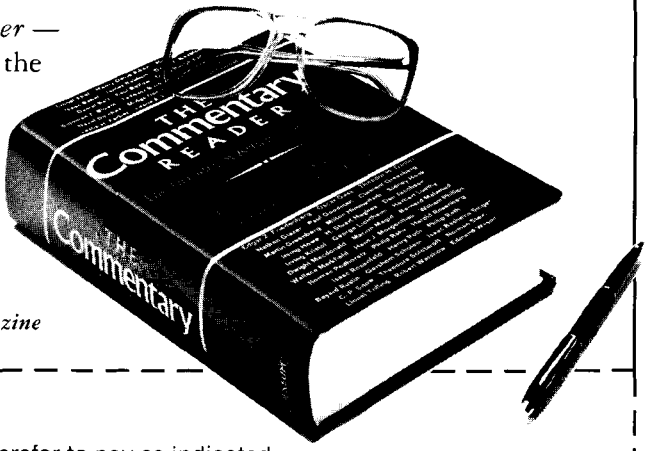

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way. Instead, Congress recently has tried to use its budget authority to micromanage the deployment of troops and arms—as in the Boland amendments—so as to deny the President his constitutional power to administer the use of the military and military arms. The relevance of the *Lovett* case is that Congress cannot use its power over the purse to usurp the constitutional powers of the President to execute foreign policy. The *Curtiss-Wright* case is not about the effectiveness of a combined presidential proclamation and a congressional joint resolution. The Justices treated the key issue of the case as what foreign-policy powers are held only by the President, and found these powers to be "plenary."

If I correctly understand David Broyles, he would add that the Founders understood that the heroic leadership to defend the nation can come only from a unified executive. This is an important point. Only the President is elected by a national electorate and takes the constitutional oath to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution." Likewise, the President is the official to be held to account for endangering the nation's security.

As to Bruce Brager's criticism of the Iran-arms-transfer aspect of this affair, no doubt releasing hostages overcame the other goals of the initiative. But there was and is much to be said for the broader policy of trying to do something to position ourselves so that a post-Khomeini Iran will be less threatening to Western interests and more independent of Soviet control than the current fundamentalist regime.

Theodor Herzl

To the Editor of Commentary:

As always, Paul Johnson has presented an incisive observation on Jewish history in his remarks on the paradoxical nature of the founding fathers of the state of Israel ["Israel's Providential Men," October 1987]. That Theodor Herzl, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Chaim Weizmann, and David Ben-Gurion each had to modify his overwhelming secularity with his traditional spirituality shows deep understanding of the Jewish dilemma even unto this day.

However, I believe Mr. Johnson —whom I have admired since his days as editor of the *New Statesman*, when it was still a truly liberal journal—is somewhat overenthusiastic in claiming that wherever Herzl went in Eastern Europe he was welcomed as a black-bearded redeemer and as "David the King!" There were in fact many communities where Herzl's death was greeted with "*Mazel tov*, the *meshiach sheker* [the false messiah] is dead!" My own father witnessed such a scene in his synagogue outside of Warsaw, where he made his first Zionist speech, at the age of twelve, denouncing the congregants for their lack of perception in calling the founder of the Zionist movement a false prophet. . . .

Daniel Spicehandler
New York City

South Africa

To the Editor of Commentary:

Peter L. Berger and Bobby Godsell are to be congratulated on their realistic analysis and assessment of the current situation in South Africa ["Fantasies About South Africa," July 1987]. It is to be regretted, however, that the implications of a "negotiated settlement" and a "policy of constructive engagement" have not also been subjected to the authors' incisive scrutiny. It is essential that the misconceptions to which these commonly used phrases give rise should be dispelled, more especially since they are usually proffered, both inside and outside South Africa, as preconditions to a peaceful resolution of the country's problems.

Just as a military denouement resulting in the defeat of the South African defense force followed by the immediate installation of black majority rule is far-fetched, so too is the notion that if only all interested parties could be persuaded to sit around a table, the ensuing negotiations would produce a new and satisfactory sociopolitical dispensation within a comparatively short space of time. Indeed, one of the fantasies that Messrs. Berger and Godsell expose is the generally held perception that change in South Africa must and will be rapidly effected. If the process of change, on the contrary, is going to be slow and incremental, then by the same token the process of negotiation and compromise will also of necessity have to be spread over a period of many years. If we accept the time-scale for change for which Messrs. Berger and Godsell argue, then we are no longer able to see change as the consequence of a culminating "negotiated settlement," whether such negotiation takes place in the near future or many years hence. We must, rather, see the process of negotiation as coextensive with a lengthy transitional period of change. What has to be negotiated is the long path leading toward a just society, requiring a multiplicity of single steps, each with predictable consequences, not one giant leap into the dark.

It is a commonly held view that Pretoria must earn respectability by putting its house in order (i.e., by "ending apartheid") before it can expect support for its reform initiatives. Messrs. Berger and Godsell describe South Africa as "a morally untenable social reality." If one accepts their conclusion that it is impossible for South Africa to change overnight, then one is also obliged to accept that South Africa will continue for some time, perhaps for many years, to be a society that is morally flawed. While the building of a new and better society is proceeding, moral injustices will inevitably persist, not because of an unwillingness by Pretoria to remove them but simply because old structures will have to remain temporarily in place while the work of renovation is going on. If the West continues to assume that every positive shift that South Africa makes short of the final one (whatever that is required to be) is part of a process of correction (and hence to be performed to the accompaniment of sanctions and boycotts or even military harassment and urban terrorism), then it will be impossible for the United States or any other Western power to mediate changes of the kind they are seeking.

The degree of pressure applied against South Africa and the degree of positive change that such pressure produces are bound to be in inverse ratio for the following reasons:

1. Economic coercion tends to encourage Pretoria's militant opponents to raise the level of violence. This in turn inhibits political change by forcing the Botha government to expend its energies in the maintenance of law and order and the introduction of measures designed to placate reactionary whites. World opinion is thereby further antagonized.

2. As foreign investors pull out, South Africa finds it increasingly

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difficult to provide improved housing and educational facilities and to increase job opportunities, all necessary catalysts for peaceful change. The ultimate sanction, namely, foreclosure by the world banking community, has already been invoked. Although an inflow of capital would be no guarantee that the pace of change in South Africa would accelerate, it is certainly true that without it South Africa's capacity for change will be drastically circumscribed.

3. The starving of the South African economy is forcing the country to inflate in order to pay for increasingly heavy state expenditures and to combat unemployment. The inflation rate is already approaching 20 percent and shows no sign of diminishing.

4. South Africa's brain-drain, already serious, will gain momentum as the economy declines and because of the disincentives of a high inflation rate and a devalued rand.

5. Coercion in any form, especially when applied by those who do not have to bear the consequences of their actions and may even profit by them, evokes a natural psychological resistance on the part of the coerced. White South Africans are no exception to this rule.

To date, South Africa has been sent no firm message other than that apartheid must be totally dismantled, including all political structures that give recognition to ethnic differences. It is this extended definition of apartheid that at the moment constitutes the greatest obstacle to the formulation of a reform program that would be acceptable both to Pretoria and its overseas critics. If meaningful progress is to be made toward agreeing on such a program, then the West will have to accept the reality of a plural society in which ethnic differences need to be accommodated. It is an ineluctable fact that a universal franchise operating in a society with clear ethnic demarcations will arbitrarily favor majority group interests, thereby giving rise to a permanent state of intergroup disharmony. As long as all attempts to neutralize this bias (which has nothing to do with racism but everything to do with cultural differences) are stigmatized and bedeviled by an unjustifiably extended definition of apartheid, any hope of finding a formula for equitable power-sharing will be indefinitely deferred.

The West, and in particular the United States, has the capacity to influence both sides of the debate. It must apply effective leverage evenhandedly. If organizations such as the African National Congress are led to believe that the West, while supporting sanctions and disinvestment, will never place any curbs on their own demands, securing their participation in orderly change will remain impossible. Those who have taken up arms cannot be blamed for thinking that the economic attrition of South Africa has the unexpressed purpose of delivering the Botha government into the hands of its enemies. . . .

Unfortunately, merely to expose the realities of South Africa's predicament is not enough and taking effective account of them will probably prove too unpalatable for countries that have grown used to regarding the Botha government as incompatible with genuine change.

KEITH A. WILSON
Cape Town, South Africa

"Unsung Hero"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the July 1987 issue of COMMENTARY, at page 62, in the context of a book review, Joshua Muravchik refers to the undersigned as the "self-proclaimed 'unsung hero' of the Camp David accords."

Said reference is snide, vitriolic, erroneous, and untrue! Had Mr. Muravchik checked the facts, he would have seen that the words "unsung hero" emanated from the White House on two occasions. In one instance, Robert J. Lipshutz, Counsel to President Jimmy Carter, speaking in his behalf, told an audience that "Leon Charney is one of the unsung heroes of the Peace Treaty. Very few people have played as significant a role."

This statement was confirmed in an interview by Mark Segal of the Jerusalem *Post* with President Carter at LaGuardia Airport in May 1983, and I quote:

> Q. [by Segal] While Counsel to the President, Bob Lipshutz chose a public occasion to pay tribute on your behalf to Leon Charney as "one of the unsung heroes of the peace process." Perhaps you could recall the circumstances warranting that description?
>
> A. [by President Carter] I don't want to exaggerate what Bob Lipshutz has said, but there were so very few people who played such a significant role and were unsung. [He had a slightly sardonic twist of the mouth.] I agree wholly with Bob.

Thus, it is self-evident that the concept of the "unsung hero" of Camp David emanated directly from the White House and President Carter and can in no way be assumed to be a self-proclamation by the undersigned.

The damage inflicted upon the undersigned due to the lack of due diligence and negligence of Mr. Muravchik is untold and, at this point, immeasurable. The least one can expect from such "amateurish" reporting is an immediate apology. It is truly a sad commentary on the magazine COMMENTARY to have approved such copy without proper research.

LEON H. CHARNEY
New York City

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

I accept Leon H. Charney's assertion that the phrase "unsung hero" originated with Robert Lipshutz, not himself. But Mr. Charney published a book publicizing this encomium and the role he believes it aptly describes. I regret having used the term "self-proclaimed"; I should have said "self-advertised."

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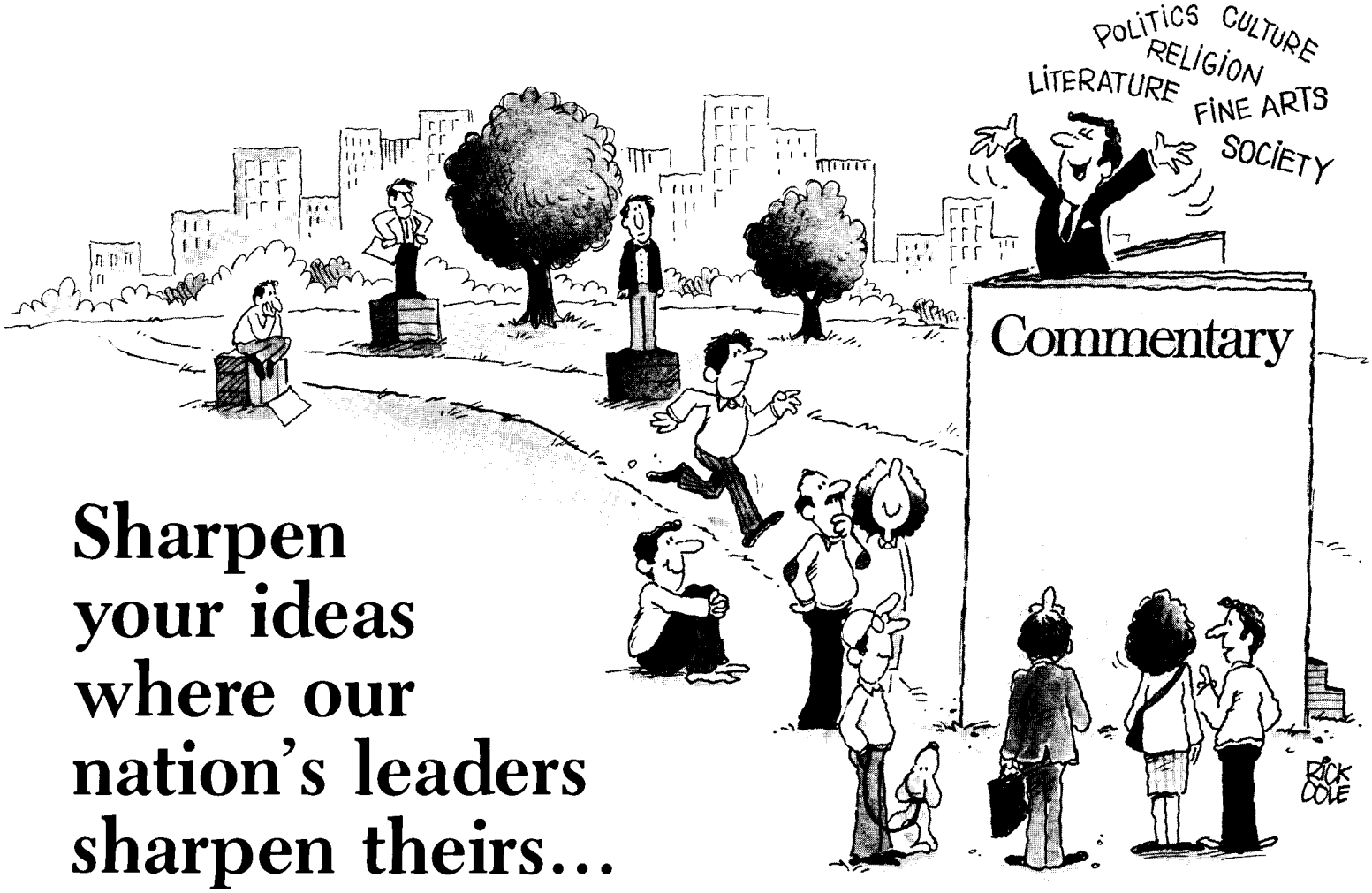

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The War Against Robert H. Bork

Suzanne Garment

IT ENDED about as well as it had begun. On Thursday, October 22, the White House decided that it was time to terminate the two-day-old Senate floor debate over the nomination of Judge Robert H. Bork to the Supreme Court. A pro-Bork Senator phoned the judge and gave him a message: the debate now looked as if it would be so long and bitter that Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd was threatening to cut it off and not resume it again for quite a while.

The meaning was clear. An extended postponement would keep the seat of recently retired Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, Jr. unfilled for a long time. If Bork persisted in his candidacy, it would be his fault that the Court would be unable to function at full strength.

Bork replied, predictably, that he did not want to bring any harm to the Supreme Court. A few more days would suffice, he said, to bring the debate to an orderly conclusion. That evening the leadership of the Senate began announcing to the press that Bork had given them the signal to end the debate and vote the next day. On Friday, at 2:00 P.M., the Senate rejected Bork's nomination by a vote of 58-42.

Thus pro-Bork and anti-Bork politicians worked together at the end to hustle the Bork debate off the public stage as quickly as possible. Well they might. The war against Robert Bork showed the modern American Left at its ugliest, and the response by pro-Bork forces showed the Right at its most impotent.

To defeat Bork, the Left spent a huge amount of money—$10 to $15 million—on a negative political campaign of a size wholly unprecedented in the history of American judicial selection. They could not have mounted such a Herculean effort had they not hated Bork with a special venom. And indeed they did hate and fear him intensely, because of the special role he had come to play as a conservative in this country's intellectual politics.

For American politicians, the presidential election of 1980 may have been about the usual political coin of patronage and congressional seats. For conservative intellectuals concerned with public policy, however, the issue was different. In the years approaching 1980 they had been speaking and writing with increasing vigor in fields from foreign affairs to regulatory policy, but in various ways they were still being denied entry into the fellowship of the cultivated. Surely, they thought, Ronald Reagan's victory in 1980 would change all that.

In most important respects this expectation proved to be wrong. When it came to the legal profession, for instance, the Reagan administration had real power available to it because of its control over the appointment of judges. Moreover, the administration actually used its power. Yet one can gauge the effect of all this Reaganite political force on our legal culture by observing the ever more luxuriant types of radicalism now thriving at the country's elite law schools.

If anything, losing the federal courts piece by piece made many people on the Left, whose views were so much out of political fashion, not chastened but bitter. In retrospect it is no surprise that this should have been so. During the early and relatively energetic Reagan years, these people had a great practical need of the courts to protect them from the President and the Republican Senate on issues from the environment to abortion. Even more important was the symbolic meaning of all the new, relatively conservative judges appointed by Reagan. Liberalism, which had once prided itself on being the party of the people, had in recent years been losing popularity and had therefore increasingly looked not to Congress but to the judiciary as its special preserve. Having come to think of the courts as in effect belonging to them, liberals were all the more disconcerted and threatened by the new conservative judges of the Reagan years.

Worse yet, liberals could not successfully charge that the Reaganites were destroying the quality of the courts by making inferior appointments. The Reagan administration by and large followed prevailing standards in the matter of judicial qualifications. It did not flood the courts with unfit judges. With very few exceptions its appointments were respectable, and some were truly impressive.

IN response to this situation, important sectors of liberal opinion began undermining the idea of the apolitical Supreme Court, the very principle that liberalism had once

SUZANNE GARMENT, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is writing a book about the politics of scandal in Washington. Her article, "Can the Media Be Reformed?," appeared in our August 1987 issue.

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defended so vigorously. When a prominent liberal law professor, Laurence H. Tribe of Harvard, argued in *God Save This Honorable Court* (1985) that Supreme Court appointments had never been anything other than grossly and patently political, he was merely dressing up and codifying the changing liberal fashion.

There is irony here. Twenty years ago at the Yale Law School, another liberal professor, the late Alexander M. Bickel, was teaching his younger colleague Robert Bork about the virtues of judicial restraint. Judges, according to Bickel, should be chosen non-democratically but should behave from that point on with great deference toward the decisions of democratically elected officials. In this Bickel was speaking from the mainstream tradition of liberal thought. By the time we arrive at the view of the liberal Professor Tribe, we are hearing that judges are chosen through politics and should be given very wide license to override the legislature in the name of their own conception of justice.

In 1986, when President Reagan nominated the very conservative Judge Antonin Scalia to the Supreme Court, there was no significant outcry from liberals. Scalia, the commentators explained at the time, was the first Italian American to be named to the Court. He had a base of political power in the Italian-American community. With his Catholicism and his many children, he was untouchable. In comparison with the frank cynicism of this kind of talk, the vague old idea of a "Jewish seat" or a "black seat" was a genteel anachronism. But the other side of the coin was soon to show itself. If a controversial conservative candidate was untouchable because he had an outside constituency, with a similar candidate who had no such clout—a candidate like Bork—it would be no holds barred.

Long before Bork's nomination this year, liberals had begun to develop a rationale for challenging just such a candidate, even one (like Bork) of the highest quality. Still, beyond the general arguments there was something special about Bork that simply drove his opponents into a frenzy. As Linda Greenhouse of the New York *Times* put it, "a kind of metaphysical shudder . . . ran through the liberal community" when Bork appeared clearly on the horizon. But why? The best way to answer this question is to turn it on its head and ask why conservatives were so enthusiastic about putting Bork on the Court.

Conservative admirers of Bork had pushed for his nomination from the very beginning of the Reagan administration. When he was passed over for Scalia, there was among conservatives attentive to these matters a sense not just of disappointment but of injustice. These people thought highly of Scalia, but they viewed Bork as in effect a holder of title to one of the nine seats on the Court.

This was not because they saw Bork as a predictable right-winger. To be sure, he had the "correct" conservative views. He was a proponent of judicial restraint. He did not like the Court's reasoning in *Roe* v. *Wade*, the decision legalizing abortion. As a judge on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, he had refused to rule that a man had a right of privacy allowing him to practice homosexual acts in the Navy. He was the author of a book, *The Antitrust Paradox*, which rigorously criticized some of the grounds on which the government habitually brought antitrust prosecutions.

But to conservatives Bork was far more than a collection of views. He had become a symbol of the intellectual force of contemporary American conservatism and an exemplar of its success in challenging previously dominant liberal ideas.

It was appropriate that he had come out of the University of Chicago. Among American academics, those who defend free markets and mistrust government regulation have traditionally been treated like moral lepers. As a result, most professors with views like these have written their books and articles cautiously, holding caveats and qualifications in front of them like shields against social opprobrium. But the Chicago intellectuals by whom Bork was influenced not only defended the free market but defended it frontally. They wrote bluntly. They were not shy about debating those with whom they disagreed. They were not apologetic. They did not act guilty.

Neither did Bork. His writings made no attempt to conceal or soften their own message. He was willing to say what he thought and just as willing to take it back if he concluded he had been wrong. He was unashamed of his conservative politics.

All the more amazing was it, then, that he should have risen to undisputed eminence as a scholar at one of the great bastions of liberal jurisprudence, the Yale Law School. He had won at the game whose rules had been established by his ideological enemies, and he had done so without genuflecting toward them and their views.

In short, the symbolic significance of the Bork appointment to conservatives lay in the challenge it represented to the liberal monopoly over the great academic institutions and even over the idea of intellectual merit itself. It was for the same reason—and not because of some argument over legal doctrines or the balance of the Court—that liberal organizations fought against his nomination as if their very lives depended on defeating him.

During this fight, anti-Bork activists and commentators often pointed out that there had been politics in the process before. Some significant fraction of Supreme Court nominees, we kept hearing, had been rejected for political reasons over the course of American history. We were supposed to conclude from this that the campaign against Bork was a normal, and therefore legitimate, event.

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It was a mark of the climate surrounding the fight that people so often quoted this disingenuous argument as if it were weighty and telling. In fact, there had never been anything remotely resembling the scale of the national media campaign that was launched against Bork. Nor was there ever anything like the degree to which constituency interest groups were organized to put sustained pressure on individual Senators.

THERE is much that the public will never know about the internal operations of the great anti-Bork campaign. Federal law does not require any substantial disclosure by the sorts of organizations through which the campaign's money flowed, and the organizations themselves are not notably forthcoming about their finances. But we do know some things, because even before the final Senate vote, the anti-Bork organizers started celebrating their victory in print.

Thus we learned from a story in the October 11 Boston *Globe*, based on interviews with Senator Edward M. Kennedy and the liberal lobbyist Anthony Podesta, that soon after Justice Powell announced his retirement from the Court, Kennedy's staff had prepared the draft of a speech about Robert Bork. Then, when Bork was named, Kennedy was ready to go. His speech raised what would become the major theme of the campaign: that Bork stood "outside the mainstream of American constitutional jurisprudence." It also made specific accusations: "Judge Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids, . . . and the doors of the federal courts would be shut on millions of citizens."

These accusations were scurrilous, but the scurrility was calculated: only language of this brutality, it was thought, would arouse the fears necessary to get the relevant interest groups moving.

Shortly after delivering this speech, Kennedy met with Senator Joseph Biden, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and then still a presidential candidate. In the fall of 1986, Biden had said that if nothing were found amiss in Bork's background, "I'd have to vote for him." But after meeting with Kennedy and then with a delegation of civil-rights activists, Biden decided that he was against Bork after all. Indeed, he declared even prior to the hearings over which it was his job to preside that he would lead the fight against Bork. As for his 1986 statement, Biden explained that he had meant only that he would vote for Bork to replace another conservative justice. Since Lewis Powell was a "moderate," Bork was not an acceptable substitute.

Biden and Kennedy now met with two other Democratic Senators—Howard M. Metzenbaum of Ohio and Alan Cranston of California—to plan strategy. The first thing they had to do was buy time to launch a media campaign and permit the interest groups to organize. Therefore the highest priority, they decided, was to make sure that there were no hearings on Bork's confirmation until after the Senate's August recess. Nevertheless, within days after this private meeting, Biden publicly pledged to the Washington *Post* that he "would not engage in any tactics to delay the hearings."

Taking advantage of the delay Biden had promised not to engineer, Kennedy worked the phones tirelessly, rousing organization heads by telling them that the Bork nomination was a major disaster for civil liberties and a major event in the lives of those who cared about such things. He also phoned the whole of the AFL-CIO executive committee and helped to persuade them that action against Bork was absolutely necessary.

Early in July Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, announced that his organization's coming conference would be focused on the single subject of defeating the Bork nomination. "We're trying to contact all the Senators—some once, some ten or twelve times," he said. At the convention, Hooks declared that he was working to get other civil-rights organizations to do the same. Around the same time, the convention of the National Education Association voted to join the fight against Bork. The National Abortion Rights Action League announced that its convention would concentrate on the Bork struggle. Eleanor Smeal, the president of the National Organization for Women, said that NOW would organize rallies and establish telephone banks for generating mail to key Senators. Later, in August, anti-Bork activists from the Alliance for Justice and the Federation of Women Lawyers buttonholed attorneys and held seminars on Bork at the convention of the American Bar Association.

The direction in which these efforts flowed is worth noting. First anti-Bork activists—academics, association officials, congressional staffers—decided what was wrong with Bork. Then a key Senator, adopting their ideas, launched the anti-Bork campaign. Next, anti-Bork Senators got together to delay the processes of confirmation, so that pressure from outside organizations could be mobilized. Finally, word went out to the members of these organizations that Robert Bork was a monster, and that they must add their voices to the pressure already being brought to bear on Senate deliberations.

NOT even all this would have been enough, however, without reinforcement from a media campaign of a scope usually seen only in a nationwide political race. The anti-Bork campaign used polling and statistical analysis to find out which themes would affect people the most, which Senators were the most vulnerable, and where advertising should be targeted. Guided by this research, anti-Bork organizations bought full-page advertisements in newspapers and ran TV spots in major markets.

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Different organizations put their names on different pieces of the effort. Planned Parenthood sponsored one big newspaper ad. The National Abortion Rights Action League ran another. But talking about the media campaign against Bork means talking most of all about People for the American Way (PFAW). And talking about PFAW means talking about its founder and leader, the Hollywood producer Norman Lear. PFAW's operating style reflects Lear's correct perception, back in 1982 when the organization was born, that the Left was in political trouble partly because the Right had appropriated all the symbols of patriotism. Lear aimed to get some of them back, and PFAW—from its red-white-and-blue logo on down—pursues liberal goals by presenting them as established elements of the American consensus.

The big anti-Bork TV commercial that PFAW ran was an example of this approach. The spot was narrated by Gregory Peck, whose screen image is one of rectitude and whose voice we all trust. "There's a special feeling of awe people get," intones Peck in the commercial, "when they visit the Supreme Court of the United States, the ultimate guardian of our liberties." As Peck speaks, a traditional four-person nuclear family, with faces of a sort we have rarely seen since *Leave It to Beaver*, is walking up the Court steps. Father points the building out to the children. Peck goes on. Bork should not be on the Court, he says: "He defended poll taxes and literacy tests, which kept many Americans from voting. He opposed the civil-rights law that ended 'whites only' signs at lunch counters. He doesn't believe the Constitution protects your right to privacy. And he thinks freedom of speech does not apply to literature and art and music." The commercial ends with the family in profile, gazing reverently at the Court. A gentle wind blows through their hair. The camera focuses lovingly on the cherubic face of the youngest. The End.

This entire spot was composed of false innuendoes and outright lies. For example, Bork never defended poll taxes or literacy tests. He said the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution was the wrong rationale for the Supreme Court to have used in striking down a $1.50 poll tax in *Harper* v. *Virginia Board of Elections*. He explicitly indicated that he was able to reach his conclusion only because the case did not involve racial discrimination. He also made it quite clear that he thought the tax might well be unconstitutional on other grounds. To turn all this into a defense of poll taxes was slander.

The PFAW accusation on the subject of privacy was just as bad. The truth is that Bork as an author has written and Bork as a judge has ruled that there are indeed rights of privacy in the Constitution. What he does not see in the Constitution is a unitary and generalized right of privacy, as it has been defined by Justice William O. Douglas. The PFAW ad deliberately and mendaciously confused this distinction.

The ad contained more such errors and lies, as did the anti-Bork campaign as a whole. For the record, the following charges made against Bork in various ads were not true: that, according to Bork, women can be forced to choose between being sterilized and losing their jobs; that, according to Bork, women have no "reproductive rights"; that Bork has voted with business in 96 percent of "controversial cases" before him on the Court of Appeals.

All these and many other lies provided the fuel for the mobilization campaign.

One of the major targets of this campaign was the Southern Democrats in the Senate. In the past such Senators would surely have been in the pro-Bork camp because of their relatively conservative views. But the anti-Bork strategists believed from their data-gathering that, this time, the minds of a number of Southern Democrats might be changed by the great persuader: electoral calculus.

There were five new Southern Democrats in the Senate. Some of them, went the argument, had literally gained their seats because of their winning margins in black areas. That is, if the black-area votes were subtracted from the winners' total, the winning numbers became losing numbers.

The "black vote" argument was not so open and shut as lobbyists and commentators made it seem. The new Democratic Senators from the South had indeed benefited from the black vote. But they had benefited from other electoral trends as well. John Morgan, who helped wage Republican Henson Moore's losing Senate campaign in Louisiana in 1986, has pointed out that the Democratic winner, John Breaux, is a Cajun. Breaux could not have won over Moore just by winning black votes; he won because he also gathered normally Republican votes from Cajun areas. In Alabama, Democrat Richard Shelby could not have defeated Jeremiah Denton in 1986, black vote or no black vote, unless significant numbers of urban and suburban whites had found Shelby an acceptable alternative to the eccentric Denton and defected from their normal Republican voting pattern. In Georgia, a good turnout among suburban Republicans in the Atlanta area, instead of the poor turnout that actually occurred, would have erased Wyche Fowler's victory margin over Mack Mattingly. And in North Carolina, Terry Sanford benefited in 1986 from his opponent's loss of a Republican's normal share of conservative "Jessecrats" (Jesse Helms, that is).

None of this means that black voters were not important to these men. But before the anti-Bork campaign started, the situation did not seem so predetermined. As late as the end of July, administration vote counters were listing most of the Southern Democrats as potentially pro-Bork. At this point the "black vote" factor did not seem to have irreversibly locked the Southerners up on

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the other side. But anti-Bork campaigners had an interest in having the starkest version of the "black vote" argument believed, the version that would leave each Senator the least room for freedom of choice.

Nationwide advertising thus heavily emphasized the alleged threat to minorities posed by the Bork nomination, creating pressure on Southern Senators from black organizations. The advertising also made pro-Bork voters uneasy and less likely to exert a contrary influence on their Senators.

BUT where was the counter-pressure from the Right? At first, spokesmen for conservative organizations promised that their side would match whatever the liberals did. Early newspaper stories on the liberals' organizing efforts always reported that the conservatives were organizing, too. This was true: conservatives and their organizations sent plenty of pro-Bork mail to the Senate, probably more than the other side did. Nevertheless, by the time the hearings began in September, no one pretended any longer that the pro- and anti-Bork sides were evenly matched in effort or pressure.

The main reason the conservative groups were not in evidence was that early on, representatives of major right-wing organizations meeting with the President's operatives were given the clear message that they should keep a low profile on the Bork issue.

Later, as the fight was nearing its finish, bitter stories started circulating in the pro-Bork camp about just why the administration had pulled its punches in this way when it was obvious that the Left was launching a massive assault. One such story was that Bork was seen by the senior White House staff—most of whom had, to say the least, no enthusiasm for him—as a political liability, to be confirmed quietly or not at all. Consequently, the story continued, when the trouble started the President's men did almost nothing to stop Bork from twisting slowly in the wind.

It is certainly true that no senior White House official—except, sporadically, the President himself—showed notable zest for the Bork fight. But when Bork's managers waved the right wing away, they were also operating from a deliberately "low key" strategy for the confirmation.

The main charge made by the Left against Bork, as his political managers saw, was that he was "out of the mainstream." One way of viewing this "out of the mainstream" charge was merely as a screen for the major battle the liberals were about to wage. Instead, the managers took the charge at face value, as meaning what it said, and they decided on a strategy to refute it. It is too much to say that they set out to "repackage" Bork as a "moderate" (though it was indirectly suggested to him that he shave his beard). But they did set out to show that Bork was not a monster or an extremist. For this, the last thing they needed was incendiary statements from the Right. Instead, they said, their arena would be the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, where fairness and reason could prevail. Their chief weapon would be Bork himself.

The tone of the hearings, when they began, was indeed different from the atmosphere on the outside. Chairman Biden boasted that not a single witness requested by the Bork forces was refused permission to testify. The Senators heard dignified language from lawyers and eminent persons of all types. Absent was the interest-group frenzy that the media campaign displayed—and even more conspicuously absent were the anti-Bork interest groups themselves.

Usually, on so controversial a matter as Bork, organizations and associations concerned with the issue actively try to get onto the witness list, so that they can have their moment of glory before the television cameras. A TV appearance gives them prestige, visibility, and an enhanced capacity to raise funds. But in this case anti-Bork organization leaders realized that testifying to the committee would be not so much an opportunity as a risk.

These groups had said a lot of things about Bork. But if their leaders became witnesses, pro-Bork Senators would get to ask them questions. The tables would be turned. It was safe enough to have a pro-Bork Senator dueling verbally in the hearing room with an anti-Bork law professor. The debate would be about ideas, and the professor could take care of himself. But when an organization leader sat down to testify, other kinds of questions could arise. What was the membership of his group? What were its general aims? What were its views of abortion or religion or crime control? Where did its money come from? How much money had it raised and spent in the campaign? What activities had it engaged in?

In short, if these groups went in to testify, pro-Bork Senators could make them and their campaign the issue. The whole strategy of the campaign was to submerge talk of the interest groups' particular aims and speak only in terms of values that were consensual: not abortion but "privacy," not "conservative" but "out of the mainstream." It was best not to testify.

THIS self-effacing tactic left Bork as the undisputed center of the hearings. His White House managers' confidence in him on the eve of the hearings was not unreasonable. They saw quite correctly that Bork was a witty and genial man, wholly without the intellectual rigidity that is the mark of a dangerous ideologue. They thought that after a few days of testimony by him, it would be impossible for anyone to charge in good faith that he was extreme, intemperate, or eccentric. In this they were right.

Yet after the hearings, as the Bork nomination floundered, the organizations that had worked to bring him down said over and over again: "We

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didn't defeat Judge Bork. Judge Bork defeated Judge Bork." Conservatives had a different lament about the hearings: Bork had been made to sound too moderate, and he had therefore failed to rouse to action the people who were his natural supporters.

Both charges were false. In the hearings Bork did just about all that he could have done on behalf of his own nomination.

His testimony lasted for four days of usually hostile questions. The pressure of the situation was enormous and deliberate. Bork's opponents were hoping that he would crack—that he would admit to some scandalous behavior in his past, for instance, or that he would say something intemperate enough to sink him. But they did not succeed in driving him into any specific misstep that they could use against him. This was extraordinary, given the length and intensity of the questioning. Moreover, Bork set a general tone in his testimony that was uniformly high, civil, and—irrelevant though it came to seem—learned.

But if the hearings were to have overcome the force of the anti-Bork campaign outside the hearing room, it was necessary for Bork to make large numbers of Americans feel an emotional connection to him, one strong enough so that they would speak up about it and move their Senators. This Bork did not do.

He did not sound as blunt as many conservative activists would have liked. Partly, no doubt, this was the result of a deliberate decision on his part. What is also true is that Bork clearly does not have unqualified views about some of the subjects that conservatives wished he would tackle. Moreover, Bork was and is a sitting federal judge. His tone was bounded by the traditional standards of the profession. He sounded—judicious.

Those who had hoped that Bork would inspire people in something like the way Oliver North had done in the Iran-*contra* hearings overlooked the fact that Bork simply did not have the personal equipment for the job. But even if he had possessed this equipment, it would have been wholly inappropriate for him to talk like an enthusiast for one political perspective or another. Bork was nothing if not forthcoming in the hearings. He answered types of questions that judicial candidates had never consented to answer before. But to make an impact through TV that might have offset the force of the campaign against him would have required behavior that Bork could not and should not have engaged in.

The hearings had their high-toned moments and their low ones. When Senator Kennedy was on, he would typically read a hostile question off a sheet that his staff had prepared for him. Bork would parry. There would be a brief silence. Then, instead of responding to Bork or pressing him further, Kennedy would rush along to the next prepared query as if he could not understand Bork's answer.

Bork's supporters laughed at this, but during one patch of the questioning, Biden kept passing Kennedy a Kennedy-Bork scorecard. "12-0," it read, then "18-0," then "24-0," then "30-0 if he keeps on." Both Kennedy and Biden knew that the point of the hearings was not to have a debate or to get any real answers to real questions. The point was to go through the forms of the process while making sure above all to preserve the air of controversy surrounding the nominee.

THE majority report that the Senate Judiciary Committee finally produced on the hearings showed unmistakably that this had been the intent behind the proceedings. The report dealt with Bork's views on various subjects—privacy, executive power, judicial restraint, civil rights, antitrust, women's rights, and the like—and found them unacceptable in each category.

There are respectable arguments to be made for views other than Bork's on all these topics. But the majority report almost never offers them, since its aim is not to debate Bork in good faith but to make the inherently dishonest case that Bork is outside the American mainstream. In the section on privacy, for instance, the majority calls Bork an extremist for disagreeing with Justice Douglas's concept of privacy in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*. The report gives no sense of the fact that there are prominent scholars on both sides of a vigorous debate over this issue. More interesting, the section makes its whole case on the subject of privacy without discussing the issue that for many organizations was at the heart of the anti-Bork campaign—that is, abortion. It is impossible to think that this central but controversial question was omitted by accident.

The report uses language like, "Prior to the hearings, Judge Bork did not include women within coverage of the equal protection clause," which is simply not true. The report charges that Bork's views on executive power place him "well outside the mainstream of legal thought" when his general views on the subject are thoroughly conventional. And so on and on and on.

More pervasive than these distortions is the anti-intellectualism that forms the whole basis of the report. In almost every one of its arguments the document's major premise is that in order to describe, categorize, and judge a legal scholar's views, one must above all know what ethnic, gender, and interest groups have been advantaged or disadvantaged by his decisions. Process is nothing; only results count.

If the majority on the Senate Judiciary Committee knew better than to treat the hearings as a meaningful debate, so did the press. After the hearings, Bork's opponents charged that it was his own performance before the television cameras that did him in. The proof of this was in the polls showing that Bork sank in popular approval after he had testified. People had seen Bork testify and decided they did not like him.

This was another of the lies of the anti-Bork

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campaign. The truth is that "people," by and large, did not see Bork testify at all. The networks televised almost none of the hearings, and not even all public-television stations ran them. The vast majority of Americans never saw any substantial part of the hearings while they were taking place.

Instead, what most people saw of Bork in the hearings was what the networks and public television chose to present on the nightly news. The usual rules of broadcasting applied. The excerpts taken out of the testimony were tiny snippets of the larger give-and-take. Viewers rarely got to see answers of any length or complexity. Sentences were selected for presentation according to what a program's producers judged to be the essence of Bork's philosophy or the day's important trend. A demagogic question and a thoughtful answer were likely to show up on the evening news—and, less defensibly, in the print media—as, "Judge Bork today denied the charge. . . ."

But even beyond the limitations of the medium, press treatment of Bork was extraordinarily lopsided. S. Robert and Linda Lichter's *Media Monitor* followed press coverage of Bork from his nomination on July 1 until the day he made the surprise announcement that he would not withdraw. Here are some of the things they found: The press quoted twice as many opponents of Bork as supporters, and nearly two-thirds of the judgments they cited were negative. Among legal scholars quoted on Bork, nearly three-quarters said negative things. The sources split evenly on his abilities, but 82 percent of those who talked about his philosophy criticized it.

Even more important, coverage became sharply more negative over time, especially on television news programs. Before the hearings, assessments of Bork by leading news organizations were balanced more or less evenly. But the figure was only 38-percent positive during the hearings and dropped to 28 percent afterward. After the hearings, not a single positive judgment of Bork was broadcast by TV news.

Thus most people got their information not from the hearings but from news sources whose bias in this instance was clearly more than accidental. Yet journalists simply repeated the line that it was Bork who had killed his candidacy in the hearings. "Bork Was His Own Worst Enemy," ran a particularly explicit headline at the end of October in the Washington *Post*. The circle of influence was complete.

AFTER the hearings, a number of Senators who had decided to vote against Bork started coming forward at conveniently dramatic intervals to announce their intentions. To the press, the anti-Bork momentum seemed irresistible. So these announcements were prominently featured in the news, and the momentum increased. Soon the journalists had other predictable elements of the story to report: top White House aides were privately conceding defeat. President Reagan was saying, kiss-of-death style, that it was up to Bork to decide whether or not he wanted to withdraw. Friends were trying to persuade Bork to back out, on the ground that forcing an actual vote in the Senate would only be a personal embarrassment and give more publicity to his defeat. It was said, falsely, that Bork's wife and family were begging him to quit. Finally, in anticipation of his imminent withdrawal, the press even mounted a "death watch," staking out Bork's home so that he could not come or go without their notice.

But almost all the Washington insiders had underestimated Bork's strength and that of his family. Furthermore, by this point Bork's enemies had managed to vilify him so much that they could do his reputation no further harm even if he decided to fight on to the end. The idea of staying in the contest became thinkable. Staying in, when everyone knew it was so much easier to quit, would make it clear that Bork was upholding the principle that the Senate must be accountable for this most important of actions. Indeed, some in the federal judiciary urged Bork to take the principled route and finish the fight, because they were appalled at what the anti-Bork campaign was doing to the judicial selection process in general.

On Friday, October 9, Bork went to the White House—to withdraw, the press was certain. But then came one of the few unplanned moments of the whole affair. Bork asked the President whether he would get support from the White House if he stayed in the fight. The President, promising what he could not deliver, said yes. On the basis of Reagan's answer Bork walked into the White House press room and said he was staying. For once, the journalists gathered in the press room were truly surprised by something that happened there.

During the period between that day and the final vote on October 23, a group consisting largely of attorneys, acting from a combination of admiration for Bork and anger at the nature of the campaign against him, launched a last-ditch effort. They had several goals in mind: to save the Bork nomination if possible, to save Bork's reputation in any case, and to expose what had been done to him and to the federal judiciary. Leonard Garment, a Washington lawyer, was one of the leaders (and I myself joined him in the effort). Another was a New York attorney, Michael Armstrong, like Garment the head of one of the professional committees that exist in many states to make recommendations on the selection of federal judges. In a parallel effort, conservative groups like the American Conservative Union and the Free Congress Foundation, which had been working with little administration encouragement, produced final mailings and advertising.

The Washington-New York effort aimed at persuading Senators that the anti-Bork campaign had

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been so dirty and full of false information as to have seriously misled them. Because of this, went the argument, Senators should not commit themselves to voting one way or another on the Bork nomination until they had heard a full debate on the Senator floor. Newspaper ads were placed to demonstrate that the campaign had been deceptive and a threat to the independence of the federal judiciary. Visual aids were prepared for those Senators, such as Judiciary Committee members Orrin Hatch and Alan Simpson, who had supported Bork staunchly and were going to lead the pro-Bork side of the debate. A team of attorneys in New York drafted detailed replies to each section of the Judiciary Committee's majority report, in an attempt to show that the report was so intellectually dishonest and of such low quality that it was itself a scandal in the history of Supreme Court nominations. (Because the debate was cut short, only three of the ten replies were delivered to the Senate before the vote.)

THIS last-ditch effort got a boost from the emergence of the story of John T. Baker. Baker was a professor at the law school of the University of Oregon and a former dean of the law school of Howard University. He had been scheduled to testify in favor of Bork. Baker was a black who, because of his former position at Howard, could not be dismissed as someone cut off from the black community. His appearance might have been of significant help to Bork's case. But at the last minute, Baker changed his mind and backed out.

After the hearings, Baker told friends that he had changed his mind about testifying because he "couldn't take the heat." Just before he was scheduled to testify, he said, he had received a call from a woman he had known for some time, Linda Greene. She was black, a lawyer, and a Metzenbaum appointee on the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee. She told Baker that if he appeared before the committee, he was going to be humiliated. She already knew the questions the staff had prepared, and they had little to do with Baker's views about Bork. Instead, they were questions about Baker's own ability and character.

The majority was going to charge Baker, before the TV cameras, with being unqualified to talk about the constitutional issues that formed the crux of the Bork debate. What is more, the majority was going to dredge up the story of why Baker had left the deanship of Howard Law School. Baker had resigned from this post publicly charging that the university's administration would not permit him to establish and enforce the professional standards that were necessary if Howard was to have a respectable law school. Some days later, the president of Howard, James Cheek, charged that Baker had really left because Cheek would not give in to his extortionate demands for increased salary and benefits. If Baker testified, warned Greene, he would be exposed to the embarrassment of this controversy once again.

Baker phoned the White House and canceled his appearance.

Although Greene insisted that she had acted out of no motive but sisterly love, her exchange with Baker was, on the face of it, intimidation of a witness, and the story probably did succeed in raising some doubts about the legitimacy of the anti-Bork campaign. Nevertheless the last-ditch effort failed. This was not surprising; the attempt was a long shot in the first place. If there was to have been any chance of switching a vote or two to "undecided" and reopening the fight, it was necessary that everyone think the pro-Bork forces were playing to win. This condition was never met. The White House explicitly refused to entertain—even as a tactic—the possibility of reversing the trend against Bork. Named and unnamed White House sources kept emphasizing to reporters that the Bork battle was lost. Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole did the same. When Vice President George Bush began making spirited pro-Bork speeches, he was stopped. The Justice Department provided generous tactical help but did not want the campaign to go beyond a set of narrow bounds.

There were respects in which the final pro-Bork effort was easier than anticipated. Volunteers turned out to be available. Money, contrary to earlier predictions by Bork's White House managers, was available as well. Outside groups, far from being standoffish, as they had earlier been described, were willing to help. The substantive case was even stronger than had been anticipated. But all these factors were as nothing against the determination—on the part of those who were tired, who wanted to avoid further confrontation, who worried about the next battle, or who had developed a psychological or ideological stake in failure—that the fight be over.

In the week of the final debate, 23 judges of the Second Circuit, the country's most prestigious, signed a petition deploring the nature of the campaign that had been waged against Bork. Whatever one's views of the nominee, the petition was an event that should have been of major interest to any journalist purporting to be concerned or knowledgeable about the American judiciary. To have so many judges putting their names to a public-policy document of this sort was highly unusual in the history of the federal courts and a clearly significant result of the Bork affair. But the reporter for the New York *Times* had to be badgered into even mentioning the event at the very end of a long story on the confirmation fight. Norman Lear's campaign in the South had shaped Bork's fate, but it was attitudes like this that sealed it.

BORK's opponents said over and over that Reagan himself had been the one to politicize the process, by calling for law-and-order

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judges in his political speeches. Yet the Reagan administration, though it certainly did appeal in its campaigns to popular frustration with "soft" judges, accepted conventional constraints when the time actually came to name people to the bench. Indeed, the big fight over the propriety of the administration's judicial selection process had been about whether Justice Department questioners should be allowed to ask prospective nominees how they felt about *Roe* v. *Wade*. This question is as nothing compared with all the things that were asked by the Judiciary Committee of Robert Bork.

Bork's pursuers also kept insisting that rejecting Court nominees for political reasons was as American as apple pie. It is possible that some of them believed this. Yet in recent times, the rejections we call "political" have been hung on some nonpolitical peg. When Bork's name went to the Senate, that body had not rejected a nominee for seventeen years—not since G. Harrold Carswell (nominated by Richard Nixon). There had been politics in that rejection, but opponents had also argued successfully that Carswell presented a serious problem of competence. A little earlier there had been Clement Haynsworth, also nominated by Nixon, whose rejection was also politically motivated. But opponents managed to discover a conflict of interest in Haynsworth's performance on the bench. Similarly with the rejection of Supreme Court Associate Justice Abe Fortas, nominated by Lyndon Johnson to be Chief Justice. In that case, which anti-Bork partisans cited as a justification for their campaign, opponents could and did point to the issue of Fortas's participation in politics while on the bench, the problem of lecture fees paid to him out of earmarked funds collected from businessmen, and his refusal to go before the Judiciary Committee and answer questions about these matters.

There was more at work here than hypocrisy. As long as an administration feels compelled to pay obeisance to nonpolitical standards like character and competence, there are limits to the types of people it can pick as judges. Political congeniality cannot be the only criterion. As long as the Senate opponents of a Supreme Court nominee feel compelled to find a nonpolitical reason for opposing him, they acknowledge that the confirmation process should take place free of the intervention of partisan politics. As long as they make this acknowledgment, they accept very definite limits on the sorts of political arguments they can use and the kinds of political pressure they can apply.

To be sure, Bork's opponents tried very hard to find a conventional "hook" on which to hang him. They tried to disinter the Watergate episode known as the "Saturday night massacre," in which then-Solicitor General Robert Bork stayed on to become Acting Attorney General after President Nixon had fired Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus. Witnesses were produced from Nixon's Department of Justice who testified to the Judiciary Committee that Bork had been insufficiently zealous in finding a new special prosecutor to replace the recently dismissed Archibald Cox. The charge was false, and the evidence to disprove it was available to the committee. Elliot Richardson and Archibald Cox themselves had said publicly that Bork had acted in a wholly honorable fashion. This did not prevent the committee from staging its Watergate show. But it did keep the Watergate charge from being very useful as a tool against Bork.

The opponents also surfaced allegations that Bork was a tax delinquent, that he was a drunk, and that he had deceived a fellow judge in the writing of an opinion. From the Hill came rumors that Bork's wife Mary Ellen did not believe that the Holocaust had ever occurred. But nothing took. There was no scandal. During the course of the hearings, Chairman Biden admitted aloud that there simply was no significant blot on Bork's integrity.

But—and here is where one of the crucial lines was crossed—the opponents would not stop. They went ahead to oppose Bork on purely ideological grounds. They did not do this honestly, by saying that they hated Bork's ideas. Failing a scandal of the usual sort, they decided to present Bork's philosophy as itself a scandal. When they said he was no true conservative, or that he was extreme and outside the mainstream, they were saying that Bork's were not the sort of ideas that should be met through the normal give-and-take of serious argument. They were saying that Bork's views were beyond the pale, that they were threats to the American system and should be treated as such rather than listened to with seriousness or respect. If the opponents had only said that Bork's ideas were wrong, they would have had to muster sustained arguments against them. But if his ideas were scandalous, then their mere existence was enough to disqualify him from the Court.

Most of the scandals that the opponents discovered in Bork's views were sheer inventions. Even the scandals they claimed to have discovered in his early writings, before his career as a judge started, were not genuine. One of their best-known examples was a 1963 *New Republic* article in which Bork had called the principle of the pending Civil Rights Act of 1964 one of "unsurpassed ugliness." In citing this, the anti-Bork forces meant, of course, to show that Bork had opposed the idea behind one of the most basic of civil-rights documents. Here they were guilty of yet another misrepresentation.

In his *New Republic* article Bork had quoted Mark deWolf Howe condemning segregation as one of the "ugly customs of a stubborn people." Bork agreed: there could be no doubt about the "ugliness of racial discrimination." But he wor-

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ried that parts of the pending act could turn into another sort of unnecessary coercion, and it was this that Bork called a principle of "unsurpassed ugliness"—using the particular word "ugliness," of course, as an echo of Howe.

Though Bork was overstating for literary effect, the reality here was simply not scandalous, especially in light of the fact that, as the *New Republic*'s liberal editors said in the same issue, many of its readers shared Bork's worry. But there was something more important for the present case: Bork repudiated his 1963 view, publicly, fourteen years ago. Throughout the campaign against his nomination, Bork's opponents, even if they mentioned that he had disavowed his earlier view, accorded it the same weight as if he were still committed to it.

At present Bork is an appeals court judge of acknowledged prudence. For years, though, he was a writer and a law professor. His obligation during those years was not to behave with maximum prudence. Quite the contrary. His duty was to follow his ideas where they took him, to spin out the implications with honesty and imagination, and then to apply the same honesty in admitting mistakes when further argument and evidence required him to do so.

As everyone recognizes, Bork took these obligations seriously—that is, he spoke honestly, assumed that his intellectual adversaries made their own arguments in good faith, and readily admitted he was wrong when so persuaded. Yet it was on the basis of these qualities that Bork's opponents on the Left declared him unfit for the highest judicial office. In doing so they attacked the entire process by which intellectual life does and should go on.

The irony here is large. For a long time now liberals in America have denounced conservatives for anti-intellectualism and have represented themselves and the institutions they control, like universities and the courts, as the preservers and defenders of intellect. In the Bork campaign they acted with a contempt for intellect at least as bad in its way as anything that ever came out of the fundamentalist Right of the 20's.

The anti-Bork forces would not have been able to make their anti-intellectual appeal decisive, though, were it not for the other line that they decided to cross: the line between the insider politics of judicial selection and the constituency politics of a national political campaign. No matter how fierce the politicking on the inside has been in the selection of federal judges, and it has sometimes been fierce indeed, the Bork campaign was different. Those who claimed that the media aspect of the campaign meant little, and that the important decisions were made by the Senate, were being either ignorant or disingenuous.

The achievement of the anti-Bork campaign was, first, to use the media to activate outside pressure groups on a large scale. Second, the campaign managed to bring this force to bear on Senators who then reached their decisions on the basis of factors that had never influenced them so powerfully before.

But, as Norman Lear has replied to his critics on this issue, what is wrong with that? Should we not be proud to see the American people making clear what they will and will not stand for on the Supreme Court? Is this not democracy in action?

The answer, which Americans should not have to have repeated for them, is that under the system designed by the Founders, judges are not supposed to be chosen by popular election. This does not mean that judges are to be fully insulated from democratic pressures. After all, they are to be selected by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. But the insulation must be substantial. According to the Founders, judges should not live in fear of losing their positions for making decisions that yield the "wrong" results from the point of view of one or another pressure group.

We have at various times been more or less respectful of this principle, but there can be no doubt that it has been at the base of whatever success we have enjoyed as a society under law. It is the failure to show the slightest bit of care or respect for this truth that makes Lear-type talk about "democracy" a national menace.

IT WILL take years to undo the damage that the war against Bork has wreaked, if indeed the harm can be undone at all. There was a sense, though, in which those on Bork's side of the case also incurred a substantial share of the blame. Since the 1980 election, many conservatives have tended to bask complacently in the false sense that the American electorate had won their fight for them. But the activists of the Left did not accept defeat and skulk off into a helpless silence. They pulled in their horns, solidified their bases in liberal organizations, waited for the appropriate target, then ran up the hill with a vast war whoop.

They were delivering a message: that the Left is no more tolerant than it was twenty years ago of ideas to the right of its own, and that its deepest hatred is reserved for public figures who champion those despised ideas with genuine intellectual skill. We are going to have another twenty years of ideological strife in which to remember the lesson.

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Responding to the Bible

Fernanda Eberstadt

THE Hebrew Bible, that thunderous, juicy compendium of sacred law, poetry, history, and novella, is supremely a reader's book, a book for reading and even a book about reading. Not only has it generated well over twenty centuries' worth of after-the-fact riposte, elucidation, and elaboration by poets, scholars, and religious leaders—one of these commentaries is called the New Testament—but the Bible itself may be said to be a work insistently self-glossing. Thus, even within the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy refines the laws of Exodus and retells the events of Numbers, while later on Isaiah, Amos, and the Psalmist spin allegories upon the history retailed in the Mosaic books.

More uncannily still, almost like some strange modernist masterpiece, the Bible from time to time records the experience of itself being read, going so far as to divulge the reactions of a number of different readers and auditors. In the Book of Nehemiah we learn, heart-stirringly, of the returned exiles from Babylonia gathering in the "open place" in Jerusalem, "men and women and all who could understand," to hear Ezra, aloft on a wooden pulpit, recite to them from the Book of the Law, while the priests interpreted and clarified the words "and caused them to understand the reading" so that the people, understanding, wept.* Not the smallest lesson contained in this episode of mass exaltation is its reminder to us that the Bible is very likely the first legal and sacred book in human history intended not for a royal and/or priestly caste but for all—for, as we would say, a general audience.

At a different pole is Jeremiah's report of King Jehoiakim, sitting in his winter house "in the ninth month" with a fire burning in the brazier, reading the Book of Jeremiah itself and, as he reads, hacking out each column of the scroll with his penknife and throwing it into the flames "until all the scroll was consumed in the fire." The reader, reading about how the book he is reading was burned to cinders, can almost see behind the flickering flame of the Hebrew letters the singed and blazing words of a Prophet who himself describes God's word as a fire shut up in his bones. (Just to punish Jehoiakim, Jeremiah proceeded to rewrite the whole scroll from memory, "and there were added to them besides many similar words.")

And what of the Prophet Habakkuk, commanded by the Lord to inscribe his visions on a stone tablet, in letters so plain that "he that reads it may run"? For anyone who credits biblical providence, here quite clearly is an instance of Holy Writ anticipating (and meeting) the needs of the harried New Yorker.

Yet the unhappy truth today is that this book, once as well-known and well-studied as the alphabet, is no longer much read at all, except by specialists and by that ever-smaller section of the general public who are believing Christians and Jews and thus in varying degrees take to heart the instruction of Moses to speak of it "when thou sittest in thy house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." To make matters worse, these two interested parties, the biblical scholars and the devout, have on the whole been working at cross-purposes. Believers read and understand the Bible as God's revealed word, while for the last 150 years or more, biblical scholarship has been dominated by the historical-critical approach which treats the Bible not as a unified revelation but as a composite document, consisting of reworked legends from the Near Eastern background and of histories written and edited by various schools of priestly scribes laboring centuries apart.

Now in recent years a body of critics and scholars have sought to consolidate what we might call a third way of reading the Bible, neither as sacred writ nor as anthropological source book but as great literature. These critics mean to reintroduce the Bible to the general, which today means the unbelieving, public by presenting it as an artistic masterpiece, one which we can understand and best appreciate with the tools of literary criticism

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* With a few slight variations I will be using throughout the Koren ("Jerusalem") Bible for quotations from Hebrew Scripture, and the King James Version for quotations from the New Testament (and for the spellings of all proper names).

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—that is, by examining vocabulary and diction, images and figures of speech, narrative modes, means of creating character and incident, tone, pace, viewpoint, play of ideas. In thus proceeding the literary approach aims more or less consciously to restore to the Bible an integrity—no longer of revelation but of artistic intent—which was shattered by the efforts of the historical-critical school to separate the text into its supposedly original components.

It is one sign of the success and vitality of this approach (which is not without its debt to more traditional modes of exegesis) that in the last months, two significant anthologies of literary criticism of the Bible have been published, both of them aimed at the common reader.

THE idea behind *Congregation: Contemporary Writers Read the Jewish Bible** is captivating. If the Bible today is best understood as a work of literature, who better to grasp and convey its graces than a writer? Creative writers, after all, have an attitude toward reading like the attitude of an athlete toward food—they read in training—yet at their best (as poets from Dryden to W.H. Auden, Randall Jarrell, T.S. Eliot, and Joseph Brodsky have demonstrated) they can make splendid and surprising critics of other writers, bold, lavish, eccentric, single-minded, contrary, and free. For this reason alone one opens *Congregation* anticipating a mine of rough diamonds, for here a congeries of 20th-century American poets, critics, and storytellers, Jewish but for the most part untutored in biblical scholarship, confront their Judean counterparts from the 10th, 5th, and 2nd centuries B.C.E.

No such luck. *Congregation* proceeds through the Hebrew Bible methodically, with each biblical book assigned to a different writer. Thus we have a chapter on Genesis by Isaac Bashevis Singer, on Exodus by Harold Bloom, and so on, all the way through Chronicles, with contributions by figures as diverse as Mordecai Richler, Richard Howard, Anne Roiphe, Elie Wiesel, and Herbert Gold. (There are exceptions: some especially popular books, like Jonah and Psalms, seem to have found two different suitors on their dance cards, while wallflowers like Obadiah and Zephaniah never make it onto the floor.) As it turns out, however, the truly fresh and provocative chapters in *Congregation* are those contributed not by the ingenues on the biblical scene but by professional literary critics. Of these, the most striking (in different ways) are by Harold Bloom and Cynthia Ozick. Each of these writers excels at exposing and analyzing both the aesthetic and the intellectual facets of the text; the difference between them is that Harold Bloom is stimulating but wrong while Cynthia Ozick is beautiful and right.

Bloom's essay is largely devoted to a discussion of the book of Genesis—except that, since Isaac Bashevis Singer had already nabbed that assignment for himself, Bloom calls his chapter "Exodus." The essay is a vivid, quirky, and thoroughly mistaken portrait of the so-called "J" writer, to whose pen historical critics ascribe the livelier portions of the Pentateuch. Bloom characterizes "J" as a sublime and basically irreligious narrator who revels in ambiguity and conflict, and who enjoys rather uneasy relations with the God, Yahweh (or Jahweh—hence "J"), Whom he "invents" in the Pentateuch. This God is a figure approvingly described by Bloom as

> incommensurate yet rather agonistic, curious and lively, humorous yet irascible, and all too capable of suddenly violent action. But J's Yahweh is rather *heimlich* also; He sensibly avoids walking about in the Near Eastern heat, preferring the cool of the evening, and He likes to sit under the terebinths at Mamre, devouring roast calf and curds.

For this critic, romantic in sensibility and rather old-fashioned in his frame of reference, who exalts irony and rebellion and decries the "normative," the high point of the Pentateuch is not the lawgiving at Mount Sinai but Jacob's all-night struggle with God at Jabbok, an event which does indeed piercingly exemplify one aspect of the Israelite soul, that of the incorrigible overreacher. (Israel, after all, means "God-fighter.") But there is another aspect, that of the worshipper marked by a loving if sometimes quarrelsome submission to God's will, which Bloom either underestimates or simply dislikes, and so ignores. This leads him into blockheaded critical blunders, as in his assertion that the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 must be a changeling version, supplanting an original version (by "J," of course) in which Abraham would surely have argued himself blue in the face to avoid slaughtering his own son on Mount Moriah.

But the Abraham of the Bible is a more complex, generous, and diffident organism than Bloom's Abraham. A man living before the birth of Israel and its divine covenant and, with God, still working out all the rules, still molding and manipulating the wet clay of the Law, Abraham is indeed invigorated by (in Bloom's words) a "shrewd courage and humanity," yet like all biblical heroes he is also self-denying in the crunch. This Abraham may pester and browbeat God out of annihilating a foreign city, but he is the same Abraham who, after winning a lost battle for four neighboring kings, refuses to accept any war booty for himself, only what is due "the men who went with him." And it is this same Abraham who either out of an inborn attitude most succinctly expressed in the Bible by Job—"the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord"—or out of gut-trust that God will by

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whatever means fulfill His promise to multiply Isaac's seed, offers up wordlessly his son, his only son, even Isaac, whom he loves.

Obedience, chafing, revolt, ardent submission, backsliding, and repentance: these are the choppy currents of biblical man's relation to God. To glorify the sassy, ironic, and rebellious in Scripture and foist off its heartfelt assents on some inferior interpolating author ("E" rather than "J") is to leave us with half a story, and the easier half at that. *Anyone* interested in human character cannot but be transfixed by such gritty and subversive episodes as Jacob's nocturnal tussle with the angel of God, or David's dispatch of the warrior Uriah, whose wife he has made pregnant; but the reader who loves the Bible's words must also relish its brimful, telling silences. The fullest and most mysterious biblical moments we know are all expressions of that union with the divine experienced by Abraham on Mount Moriah, Moses in the cleft of the rock, Ruth on the highway to Judah.

It is to the last of these figures that the novelist Cynthia Ozick devotes the most profound and attentive chapter in *Congregation*. The story of the Book of Ruth everyone knows. In a familiar biblical pattern, a Judean family journeys down to Moab to escape famine at home. The man dies, his two sons die, leaving a widowed and childless Naomi with her two Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. Naomi sets back for Judah, dispatching to her own land a reluctant Orpah; but Ruth, fired by love for the God of Israel and His people, in a large, sweet, and fateful vow ("whither thou goest, I shall go," and "your God shall be my God") cleaves her fate to Naomi's, and returns with her to Bethlehem. There Ruth becomes her mother-in-law's plucky provider (treating her, say the townsmen, better than seven sons) and wins the love of their rich kinsman Boaz, whom Miss Ozick describes as endowed wih "a tenderness sweetly discriminating, morally meticulous, widehearted, and ripe." From their union is engendered the royal house of David.

Cynthia Ozick interprets the Book of Ruth as a tale of "normality" versus "singularity," of natural instincts and natural kindness versus metaphysical vision. She sympathetically characterizes Orpah as a "loving young woman of clear goodness" and "fine impulses" who, having already done more than her daughterly duty by Naomi, turns back on the highway tearful and disconsolate but ready to go and make for herself a homely new life with a Moabite husband and Moabite gods. There is a price to be paid for this, however. "What Orpah gains by staying home with her own people is what she always deserved: family happiness. . . . What Orpah loses is the last three thousand years of being present in history. Israel continues; Moab is not." In contrast to this robust and generous normality stands Ruth, afflicted not only with an almost supernatural concentration of loyal love but with an "insight, cognition, intuition, religious genius" which leads her, "like a second Abraham," from home, family, country, and gods to the unknown land of the invisible One God.

Much has been written about this small, full, golden harvest tale of ripe grain and of love for a God universal yet dearly particular; nothing better, perhaps, than this essay of Cynthia Ozick's. Indeed, one is tempted to follow Miss Ozick's lead and suggest that the Moabite Ruth is not just a "second Abraham," but a second emblem of Israel itself, a figure whose choices and utterances pattern more than one key moment in sacred Israelite history. For if it is in words duplicating the Lord's command to Abraham that Boaz describes Ruth as having left "thy father and thy mother and the land of thy birth and . . . come to a people whom thou knewest not before," it is in an echo of Israel's acceptance of the Law at the foot of Mount Sinai that Ruth answers Naomi's commands with her eloquent, "All that thou sayest to me, I will do." And it is in a poignant reflection of the Prophets' personification of Israel as a now-faithful, now-faithless wife that Boaz praises Ruth for not "going after the young men."

Cynthia Ozick speculates whether this young woman of "religious genius," gifted with Abraham's "power of consummate clarity," might not have discovered monotheism even on her own, in Moab. And if she had, would the Moabites then have become God's chosen people? An intriguing thought; yet religious epiphany in the Bible is never homegrown but is rather reserved for those who leave their own land and venture they know not where. Besides, Ruth's is a story told by Israelites, and in the ancient world it was Israel alone—a mongrel nation composed of Chaldeans, Arameans, semi-Egyptians, and even Moabites—whose religious genius found expression in the troth plighted at Mount Sinai and reaffirmed by the wilderness-crossing, God-choosing Ruth.

There are a number of other interesting chapters in *Congregation*, notably one by the poet David Shapiro on the dry, barbed, and utterly delectable prudentialism of Proverbs, the most quoted and today probably the least liked book of the Bible. And many good points are made along the way—by Elie Wiesel on the Prophet Ezekiel, by the deconstructionist critic Geoffrey Hartman on the Book of Numbers. But for the three or four perceptive essays and the dozen intriguing aperçus scattered wide across *Congregation*, there are many more pieces that are quite bad, and bad in exactly the same way. Unfamiliar on the whole with the Bible and its traditions, and short on Jewish memory, many of the contributors to *Congregation*, instead of responding wholeheartedly to the texts before them,

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or even wreaking creative havoc on them, tend to resort to the same totems of modern alienation, Jewish-style: Kafka, Freud, the Holocaust. The ongoing invocation of the last item on this list functions as a kind of double-whammy, providing justification for self-pity on a world-historical scale and frequently for the writer's own announced defection from an inadequate religion and an immoral God.

Depending on one's point of view this is either the funniest or the most alarming feature of *Congregation*. From James Atlas's description of God as a "petulant dictator," from Mordecai Richler's announcement (after Randolph Churchill) that "God is a shit," it is but a short step to the wistful notion, embraced by some of these authors, that there must be a finer religion out there—cozier, more progressive, more genteel—that better fits their image of themselves as moderns, as Americans, as liberals, as *writers*. The awful confession is made outright by Francine Prose in a rather candid and thoughtful essay on the Prophet Malachi; voicing her own shock at the "brutality" of the "Old Testament" and its God, Miss Prose takes it upon herself to speak for many Jewish readers who "are all, in a sense, Christians—that is their concept of the divine is closer to the Christian than the Hebrew."

What can one respond to this? It seems somehow inadequate to point out that, along with the Christian "concept of the divine," Miss Prose and other contributors to *Congregation* seem also to have fully assimilated the age-old Christian slander of the God of the "Old Testament" as a petty, irrational, and vindictive deity. Do the eyes of such readers simply glaze over when they light upon the wildly rapturous, unbearably tender outpourings of this God Who typically personifies Himself now as a mother giving suck to her babe, now as a doting father teaching his firstborn to walk, now as a deceived but ever-true husband entreating his errant wife to return to his care? Miss Prose, to her credit, finally acknowledges that such moments of delicate solicitousness do occasionally interrupt God's tyrannical ravings; others, however, make less scrupulous readers than she.

Antipathy not only to the Jewish God and His religion but to the Jewish Bible takes various other forms in this book as well. At its ugliest we have Gordon Lish's mannered and braggart desecration of the "bible" (*sic*) as "an alien object, uncongenial to me at its least, pestilential at its worst," a work "no Jew should want any part of." On a somewhat different front is Anne Roiphe's expression of "pity" for the childlike absolutism of the Book of Nehemiah, whose edicts she compares with the Nuremburg laws before dismissing Nehemiah's manly sobriety altogether in favor of a harangue on the evils perpetrated by Ariel Sharon and Richard Nixon. But politics in these discussions is as nothing compared with the place accorded to Narcissus. Many of the authors here, lacking the patience to attend to a text dimly remembered or hotly resented, simply use their allotted space to recall overbearing mothers, distant fathers, lonely childhoods, randy adolescences. Some of the resulting memoirs are engaging—Robert Pinsky evokes his bootlegging grandfather in Long Branch, New Jersey, Phillip Lopate tells a raunchy and haunting tale of a Delilah-like mother—some dull; some authors make an effort to connect their musings to Scripture, some cannot be bothered. In any case the net effect is altogether less of a "congregation" than of a roomful of long-winded analysands.

With the exception of a half-dozen insightful chapters, then, this collection would seem to bear a sad message—that the Bible no longer speaks to "contemporary writers," at least if they are secular American Jews, that they do not know its stories and evidently cannot bear to hear its melodies. If this loss of the Bible as an essential part of the Western artist's genetic code applies widely to writers today, it may help in some measure to account for the frailty of our literary culture. At any rate, from this particular assembly it would seem that with a few happy exceptions we can no longer look to our artists for a proper aesthetic understanding of the Bible.

Do the professional critics serve us better? For an answer we may turn to the second book under consideration, *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, edited by the distinguished critics Robert Alter and Frank Kermode.* Like *Congregation*, this new volume too sails through the Bible sequentially, with each book assigned to a different critic or scholar; unlike *Congregation*, it covers, under Kermode's aegis, the New Testament as well as the Hebrew Bible, and it also includes a third section of essays devoted to such general subjects as the formation of the canon and Bible translations. A massive book, looking, with its cream and gold-tooled cover, like nothing so much as a Sunday School Prize Day award, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* clearly represents at once a statement of *principia* and a crowning achievement of the literary approach to Scripture which, as readers of COMMENTARY have ample reason to know, Robert Alter has done so much to pioneer and promote.†

As we have seen, this approach seeks to present to the sophisticated modern reader a Bible which is neither revelation nor primitive folklore but the creative masterpiece of a literary artist nonpareil in the manipulation of character, narrative,

* Harvard University Press, 678 pp., $29.95.

† Alter's seminal articles in these pages on biblical topics include: "A Literary Approach to the Bible" (December 1975); "Biblical Narrative" (May 1976); "Character in the Bible" (October 1978); "Joseph and His Brothers" (November 1980); "The Voice from the Whirlwind" (January 1984); "Scripture and Culture" (August 1985).

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and imagery, and in the mastery of psychological realism. (For an audience immune to merely aesthetic blandishments, moreover, Alter and Kermode in their introduction pitch us a Bible which "we somehow must understand if we are to understand ourselves.") To a critic who finds he cannot live by *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones* alone, the bargain must be an irresistible one, for there can hardly be a more vast and demanding subject for literary inquiry than this work which encloses history, law, story, poem, and moral philosophy in a vessel designed for the glorification of God and so complex that its prosody has yet to be cracked.

But if the Bible is the ideal quarry, what sort of literary criticism befits the Bible? Since a literary approach necessarily sacrifices much in the way of the highest religious feeling, it would seem fair in compensation to hold it to a correspondingly exigent standard of clarity, sensibility, and intellectual cogency. All the more so, one might add, when, as in the present instance, the criticism is intended for consumption by the common reader.

At their best, the essays included in *The Literary Guide* admirably fulfill this mandate. To confine ourselves for the moment to those addressing the Hebrew Bible, Robert Alter's introduction is characteristically delicate and acute, particularly in its close readings from the stories of Ruth and Jephthah. The biblical scholar Joel Rosenberg—one of the finest of a younger generation—offers a lofty, original account of the larger psychological and political themes played upon in the Books of Samuel, and also contributes an essay on Jeremiah and Ezekiel which is graced by a high imaginative warmth and concentration. Luis Alonso Schökel of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, in a beautifully written chapter on Isaiah, is raptly attentive to the sound and shape of the poetry, to the "formal perfection and . . . particularity of style" which marks this most "classical" of biblical poets. Jack Sasson presents a practical, objective, and workmanlike introduction to the Books of Ruth and Esther, attending to sociological background, grammar, and vocabulary, while Shemaryahu Talmon is wonderfully pithy in his exposition of the post-exilic books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. In the general section, Gerald Hammond's essay on English translations of the Bible, though it underestimates the loss incurred in even the most faithful rendition, is learned, amiable, plain, and particular, revealing as much about the Bible's Hebraic core as it does about the linguistic trains of thought and theological leanings that brought William Tyndale and the revising committee of the King James Version to their respective choices.

In addition to all this, *The Literary Guide* addresses with patience and tact those drier but central portions of the Bible which literary critics have heretofore tended to ignore in favor of the more readily accessible passages of narrative and poetry. Thus, David Damrosch discusses the cultic laws of Leviticus as a vision of wholeness at the center of a tale of human fragmentation, while David Gunn analyzes the "more static, administrative prose" of Joshua's lists of tribal allotments and border settings as a kind of ideal or monitory enactment of Israel's conquest of Canaan, between whose lines can be read the actual history of a failure fully to possess the land.

THUS, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* at its best. But unfortunately not all is up to so high a standard. Typical of the *Guide* at its worst—that is, at its most academic and least literary—is Robert Polzin's chapter on Deuteronomy, the fifth and final book of the Pentateuch.

Deuteronomy presents itself as a monologue, spoken (and recorded) by Moses as he and the Israelites, camping on the borders of the Promised Land and planning its conquest, reexamine and renew their covenant with God. But in fact, Polzin claims, the book was composed not at this time but during the first millennium B.C.E., by and for a people already in exile from Israel and hoping to regain it. Hence, the book relies for its effects on the knowing hindsight of both author and audience; in Polzin's view, the narrator of Deuteronomy "infiltrates" the speeches he is reporting, entering into a kind of extended dialogue or, better, running argument with the main protagonists of his tale. Leaning upon the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of multiple voices, and also on Erving Goffman's analysis of "framebreaks" in language, Polzin gives us a Deuteronomy characterized above all by a "plurality of viewpoints": Moses, the purported narrator, versus the actual narrator; the narrator versus the figure of God; one view of God and Israel versus another.

A reader sympathetic to the literary approach cannot but be disappointed by such an angle on Deuteronomy, for, despite the interesting questions he raises, Polzin fails to appreciate the book on its own stated terms—as Moses's selective and idiosyncratic "memoir"—and so ends by giving us a reading as fractured as any produced by the historical-critical school. This is all the more disappointing since Deuteronomy is of intense interest both as a piece of stunningly realistic self-revelation and as a piece of legal and religious revisionism, and one might expect a literary approach to deal sensitively with each of these aspects.

A great hero's highly emotional and subjective recounting of a story already told in the earlier books of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy also contains that hero's anxious and insightful advice as to how Israel should finish the task which God has condemned him to leave undone.

In the book of Numbers, Moses is banned by God from entering Canaan after he angrily strikes the rock at Meribah. The punishment shocks the

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reader but Moses takes it like a man, unprotesting, unlamenting. In Deuteronomy, however, addressing himself not to God but to his own people, Moses gives full voice to all his pent-up grief and resentment, constantly returning to this cruel sentence which, he now insists, is punishment not for his own impulsive deed but for the treachery and transgressions of the worthless Israelite rabble:

> But the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not go into that good land, which the Lord thy God gives thee for an inheritance: but I must die in this land, I must not go over the Jordan; but you shall go over, and possess that good land.

In these broodingly obsessive, emphatic repetitions we hear the voice of a man fixedly pressing into his own mind the reality of an unbearable fate while hoping against hope that "I must not go over" will somehow yet be transformed into "I shall go over." As Moses's soliloquy rises and falls, the patience and resignation of "the meekest man on earth" erupt into fury and a kind of scolding anticipatory anxiety at the certain knowledge that his people, who do not deserve "that good land," will defile it and be cast out; and then, catching himself mid-curse, in the next breath Moses reassures Israel wonderingly of the constancy of God's ineffably pitying heart, which turns to jelly at any transient symptom of repentance or distress.

A literary rendering of Deuteronomy, even one (or especially one) which assumes a post-Davidic author, should chart these tempestuous shifts of emotion. Yet Polzin, although quite explicit about who he believes is speaking in Deuteronomy, is not very forthcoming about what is actually said. This applies to the non-narrative parts of the book as well. The majority of Deuteronomy, as the name suggests, is taken up with the giving of a second Law (the first having been nullified by Israel's apostasy with the Golden Calf), and if it is a biblical scholar's job to understand how the second Law differs from the first, it is the literary critic's task to demonstrate how the revision of Israelite history and law that takes place in Deuteronomy is variously informed by the character or intentions of Moses. Here, too, Polzin disappoints.

One example of a historical revision is Moses's retelling, in Deuteronomy, of the episode of the Golden Calf, a retelling in which he omits any mention of the several spontaneous and deep-reaching acts of Israelite contrition described in Exodus. One example of a revised law is the mandate to free one's slave in the seventh year: in Exodus the commandment is merely stated (and of course anchored in the command to remember Israel's bondage in Egypt), while in Deuteronomy Moses further dictates that a master, remembering the slave's trusty service, must free him gladly and gratefully, sending him away full-handed, loaded with gifts of sheep, grain, and wine.

Each of these revisions is compelled by a different aspect of Moses's character and purpose, as revealed in Deuteronomy. In the one, accusatory resentment colors his telling of the episode of the Golden Calf, reining in the drama of transgression and passionate repentance; in the other, a merciful nature warms and further psychologizes the laws of Exodus and Leviticus, imploring us not only to do right but to do it abundantly and feelingly. This latter aspect of Moses's temperament, insistently inquiring as to the heart's inner disposition, is something many people think of as being foreign to Judaism, but in fact it is wholly characteristic not only of him but, after him, of the Prophets. (In Christian Scripture, when Jesus suggests that he follows Moses in giving thought the same weight as deed, he does so as a prelude to making anger equivalent to murder, lust to fornication.)

Finally, Polzin neglects to provide the reader with a feeling for the simple and limpid Hebrew prose which makes Deuteronomy perhaps the easiest-to-read book of the Bible, or to show how this child-pure diction both serves the didactic purpose of impressing God's commands permanently upon the forgetful hearts of future generations and also beautifully reflects the dying Moses's understanding of Torah as a thing "not hidden from thee, neither is it far off" but "very near to thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart that thou mayest do it."

Polzin's failure, then, is precisely a failure to address the most obvious literary qualities of Deuteronomy—its form, its style, its means of revealing character and motive. Nor is he the only author in *The Literary Guide* who understands the word "literary" not in any traditional sense but as a shorthand for an essentially academic undertaking which may do much to advance certain theories of "narratology" and redactional heuristics currently in vogue in university circles, but little to enlighten the ordinary educated reader in search of meaning.

TO BE FAIR, exercises like Polzin's are more common in the section of *The Literary Guide* devoted to the Hebrew Bible than in that on the New Testament. The latter, written largely by British academics of an older school, is on the whole more plain-spoken, more concrete, and more sensitive to the texture of an individual writer's prose—and in some cases, one suspects, also more closely guided by religious belief or traditional piety. This, however, raises problems of its own.

A critical guide to the Bible produced by Jewish and Christian scholars, and packaging "Old Testament" and "New Testament" in one volume, necessarily involves us in the question of

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the relation between these two sacred books. Jews, of course, do not accept the authority of Christian Scripture, in whose Gospels Judaism is said either to have been "fulfilled" in Christ or superseded by him, and in whose Pauline Epistles Mosaic law is deemed the "curse" of a "blinded" people, a "ministration of death, written and engraved in stones." Christians saddled with such a teaching have for their part never satisfactorily resolved their relation to the book their Fathers annexed or to a people represented in Church and New Testament typology as at best Esau to their Jacob, Ishmael to their Isaac, stone to their heart of flesh.

The literary scholar may consider such religious and historical vexations outside his area of concern, but he is nonetheless bound to think about what it means for these two radically dissimilar Scriptures to be combined, as they are for Christians, in one book. Notwithstanding its many echoes and reworkings, the New Testament ushers in a doctrine, a vision of time and history, a conception of human and divine nature, and, not least, a body of literary forms (extended parable, pastoral epistle, hagiography, sermon) so arrestingly foreign that they would seem to call for a whole new critical vocabulary. In this respect, the King James Version of the Hebrew and Christian Bible, which many of the contributors to *The Literary Guide* take as their standard, is a deceptive text, for in its steep and sonorous prose are ravishingly blended two very different voices and imperatives, the products of two different languages and two different cultures. The reader of the King James Version turns the page from Malachi to Matthew without any sensation of a leap into the new or the unknown. It is the task of the literary critic to restore an "innocent" discomfort.

Some if not all of these questions of literary definition *The Literary Guide* amply and lucidly addresses. Within the context of the New Testament Gospels themselves, Frank Kermode and, most splendidly, John Drury offer sensible, imaginative expositions of the different perspectives and concerns which shape the various accounts of Jesus's teachings and doings. Thus Drury subtly contrasts Mark's "grim simplification" and "tough, polemical little utterances which subvert the mind's accustomed order" with Luke's more genial neoclassicism, his "lessons in adaptability and social responsibility," his richly worded parables, as "full of domestic detail as a Dutch painting." This is literary criticism of a high order, so simple, so humane, and so interesting that it seems to have been infused with Luke's own "wisdom of daylight."

THE Epistles of Paul are a thornier subject altogether, though once again well-dealt with here. But still one misses some sense of the whole, some sense of what is indeed new about the New Testament. A reader who has not studied that work but who comes equipped with the conventional preconceptions about the difference between the Christian and the "Old Testament" ethic may, in fact, be surprised by what he finds in the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. The portrait of Jesus that emerges (for all the variety in the accounts) is of a man marked by an extreme and isolating self-denial; a man ravenous for love, but who insists on persecution and martyrdom; a man who rebuffs his own, whether mother, brothers, or countrymen, and instead gathers outcasts and pariahs; a man wound tight with a cryptic and caustically sharp wit released in occasional "inappropriate" outbursts of levity (when his goody-goody disciples reprove a woman for anointing their master's head with oil that could have been sold for alms to the poor, Jesus retorts, "Ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always").

The gospel revealed in the life of Jesus is a gospel of individualism and inwardness, of self-conquest, watchfulness, impatience, radical inversion: leave your mother and father and children, give away your wealth and possessions, seek persecution, renounce the flesh, hate the world, worship God not in a likeminded community but secretly in your closet. Where the first and abiding command of the Jewish God is "Be fruitful and multiply," Jesus—and how much more so Paul—exalts chastity on the very ground that married people and families put too much store in the world, relying on human continuity and thinking above all to provide for their own. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. . . . He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

Compared with these high subversive paradoxes ("Resist not evil"; "love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you"), the commands of the Hebrew Bible seem cheerful, pragmatic, reasonable, sociable, almost mundane, an effort not to vanquish human nature but to temper and govern it, to strengthen those institutions Jesus would level. And yet anyone who reads Matthew's Sermon on the Mount must also feel that though it were impossible to live up to such an ideal, it would be ignoble, almost less than human, not to try.

For a New Testament version of the kind of familial tenderness that suffuses the Prophets, the canny worldliness and knowing ironical affection for human-nature-as-it-is that we find in the Pentateuch and the Books of Samuel, we must go first (as John Drury shows) to Luke's parables and then, strangely enough, to Paul's letters. These run a gamut from the hot-tempered and unfair to

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the diplomatic to the insinuatingly sweet and homely. An example of the last is Paul's epistle to Philomen upon returning a runaway slave, now saved in Christ: "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved. . . . If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. . . ." One almost feels that Moses himself would approve.

It was, of course, Paul who expanded and fortified Jesus's teachings into a proselytizing church, and he did so in part by transvaluing Judaism's values, by using against the Jews a deliberately reduced understanding of the Law, and by inventing a new method of biblical exegesis that would convert the Hebrew Bible into fodder for his own religion. This method, which we call typology, consists of reading the Jewish Bible as an extended prophecy of Christianity. Its simplest aspect is shown in the Gospel of Luke when the risen Jesus, walking to Emmaus with his disciples, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Paul expanded the field by interpreting not only prophetic utterances but also actual Israelite heroes and historical events as symbolic prefigurations of Christ. Thus, in Paul's Epistles, Moses and the pagan high priest Melchizedek become forerunners of Jesus, and all the patriarchs and matriarchs of Genesis are transformed into patterns of Christian fidelity, while contrariwise Jesus is depicted, for example, as an apotheosis of the Passover lamb. Typology is Paul's and Christianity's invention. It is quite different from the Hebrew Bible's own internal methods of exegesis, in which Samuel or Ezra might resemble Moses, or the return from Babylon may be understood as a second Exodus from Egypt, but neither Moses nor the Exodus could conceivably be regarded as a promise, necessarily partial and incomplete, of later and greater things to come.

Gabriel Josipovici, in a brilliant and severe essay on the Epistles to the Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles, deems Jesus's and Paul's reading of the Hebrew Bible "an act of colonization," reducing its ambiguity and rich detailing of "often confused and contradictory lives . . . to moral exemplars." This is perhaps too harsh a verdict. It might also be said that the sometimes enriching, sometimes draining act of appropriation and transformation that went into Paul's invention of Christianity was in certain respects an artistic enterprise. Moreover, this significant revamping of a dominant local culture is not without its Near Eastern precedent, as we are reminded by Jonas C. Greenfield's essay in *The Literary Guide* on the Israelite uses of Canaanite literature. Much as Paul unfairly mocks the Jews for worshipping "stone tablets," so Israel's God mocks the pagans for bowing down to wood and stone. As in any other act of creation, the result is new: Israel, borrowing polytheism's trimmings, brought into being such unprecedented forms as universal law and prose epic; Jesus and Paul, transforming Judaism's national religion into an individual one, required correspondingly new modes of thought and literary expression.

The view of the Hebrew Bible as a typological forerunner is at once inimical to Judaism and inescapable to Christianity, which necessarily depends upon a progressive view of history and revelation, a slow, steady spread of light, in contrast to the dispossessions and reconquests, the apostasies and returns of the Jewish national story. The alternative to typology, one scholar observes in *The Literary Guide*, would be to throw out the "Old Testament" altogether (as indeed the Gnostics recommended) and go it alone. It is obviously too late for that; but how far is the "progressive" project to be taken?

Some of the theological implications behind the packing of Hebrew Bible and Christian Scripture into one Genesis-through-Revelations portmanteau are spelled out by Gerald Bruns in a very stimulating essay entitled "Midrash and Allegory." Bruns writes, following Origen, that "The Old Testament is to be read as a midrash of the New, just as the New Testament is a midrash upon the Old. This midrashic circle gives the theological structure of promise and fulfillment." Such a statement, not all that uncommon in the New Testament portion of *The Literary Guide*, is sonorous but treacherous. The New Testament does in some respects function as a running commentary upon the Hebrew Bible (and as much more), but one cannot imagine how the Hebrew Bible can in good faith be read as a "midrash" upon Christian Scripture, nor can one imagine Jews feeling comfortable with the proposition either that Christianity is a fulfillment of their "promise" or, since we are dealing with a "midrashic circle," that Judaism is a fulfillment of the promise of Christianity.

From this false assertion of "interdependency," to borrow another scholar's word, follows Bruns's claim that the Bible is concerned not with the past but with the prophetic future, and that therefore "what is at issue with respect to the Scriptures is not what lies beyond the text in the form of an original meaning but what lies in front of it where the interpreter stands. The Bible always addresses itself to the time of interpretation; one cannot understand it except by appropriating it anew." The trouble with this proposition is that central to both Hebrew and Christian texts are such imperatives as memory, historicity, the fixing of tradition, and the transmission of ultimate though history-bound truths. Jesus and Paul may have been violent in their uses of the Jewish Bible (so were the Prophets

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radical in their readings of the Pentateuch), but each would have been appalled by the notion that Scripture is whatever the latest comer wishes to make of it. Under such thin, black ice one spies the unlikely confluence of Christian exegesis and literary deconstruction, a school of thought according to which readers are virtually mandated to manipulate texts for their own creative purposes, innocent of anything so transitory or incomplete as authorial intent.

Still, a reading like Bruns's, while it diminishes the ambiguity and autonomy of the Hebrew Bible, does impose a steady, whole view of the text which, even if it is misleading, serves at least to remind us of what the literary approach at its finest can yield. Just such a steady view tends sometimes to be missing from *The Literary Guide*. Although it contains a slew of interesting and sensitive essays, at moments this book does not so much repair the atomization of Scripture brought about by historical scholarship as substitute another, academic form of fragmentation in its stead. (How could it do otherwise, seeing that Edmund Wilson may be invoked on the jacket cover, but Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and Erving Goffman hold sway within?) In this crucial respect the volume at times falls short of realizing its stated aim of teaching us how to read a work which "we somehow must understand if we are to understand ourselves."

In a chapter on Psalms in *Congregation*, Allen Mandelbaum cites a talmudic description of King David, awakened at night by the north wind as it blows through his window and causes his lyre to play. "If David's lyre is seen as played upon by a force beyond himself," writes Mandelbaum, "then even he, David, becomes not the singer but the sung." This beautiful trope, emblematic of the artistic and religious vocation—the poet as an instrument played by God—applies also in some measure to an aesthetic response to Scripture. Reading the Bible, even "as literature," calls for a yearning, full-hearted, and alert receptiveness to language, logic, and imagery; it calls for the faculty resonantly captured by King Solomon when he asked of God only "a listening heart" to judge. It is just such a ready and reverent responsiveness which in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, despite its many excellences, is regrettably sometimes subordinated to theory or obscured by jargon—and which in *Congregation* shines forth as no more than short, brilliant days between dark nights of egotism.

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McCarthyism: The Last Refuge of the Left

Peter Collier and David Horowitz

In the 1950's Senator Joseph R. McCarthy made a career of finding Reds under every bed. Today, the culture which so despises him finds traces of McCarthy himself under every bed. Thus a spokesman for the Tobacco Institute attacks the "McCarthyism" of anti-smoking activists, while a *Playboy* editor condemns the Meese commission on pornography for its "sexual McCarthyism." The author of a recent book on AIDS says that the disease has created "the public-health version of McCarthyism," and the editor of the *Journal of American Medicine* claims that urine tests are "chemical McCarthyism." And in a twist that must have the late Senator from Wisconsin turning in his grave, a university professor in California has even charged that complaints about the easy access the Soviet propagandist Vladimir Posner has to American television are "part of the lingering slime of McCarthyism."

In short, thirty years after McCarthy's death, "McCarthyism" has become an omnibus synonym for sinister authority and political repression, a word to describe the hate that dare not speak its name. Individuals and parties compete to brand each other with the Scarlet M, using the term as a moral trump. Liberals, for example, charged Patrick J. Buchanan with McCarthyism when, during his tenure as Ronald Reagan's director of communications, he drew the plausible—if arguable—conclusion that a vote against aid for the *contras* was a vote for the Sandinistas; and more recently, conservatives who otherwise might harbor a secret fondness for McCarthy charged the Iran-*contra* committee with McCarthyism during its grilling of Oliver North.

In some sense, then, the term is just another weapon in the language of combat. But it also has a more specific function in our political culture, as a pair of recent events suggests.

The first concerns the furor surrounding a leaked memo about Senator Howard Metzenbaum's youthful connection in the 40's with organizations such as the National Lawyers Guild and the Ohio School of Social Sciences (a Marxist training center of which he had been a trustee). Although not writing for publication, the authors of the memo had a bad case of the jitters, discussing Metzenbaum's involvement in these organizations with timorous circumlocution. (" . . . Opponents should cautiously use the material to expose the fact that Metzenbaum's background shows evidence of significant concern for issues of interest to Communist organizations.") They warned Ohio Republicans that if the material got into unfriendly hands, they might be attacked as "McCarthyistic," which is of course exactly what happened when it was leaked to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

A similar event, but with an opposite outcome, had occurred a few months earlier when George Crockett, a Democratic Congressman from Detroit, was named the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. Going public with their qualms, a coalition of conservative groups held a press conference in Washington to express alarm over Crockett's enthusiasm for the Sandinistas and his support for American radical groups sending aid to Marxist guerrillas throughout Central America. But the conservatives were even more concerned about Crockett's past record stretching back for forty years. In 1949 Crockett served as one of the lawyers for the Communist party's eleven top leaders, who had been indicted under the Smith Act for conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the government by force. Eventually he got a four-month jail sentence for attempting, in concert with the rest of the defense team, to disrupt the proceedings. Since then he has regularly endorsed Soviet front organizations like the World Peace Council.

Nor, in contrast to the case of Metzenbaum, were these merely youthful indiscretions, later outgrown. While the report on Metzenbaum wrongly suggested that his early associations were still reflected in his record as a U.S. Senator, the pattern of forty years earlier was indeed still visible in Crockett's record in Congress. In 1983, when the Soviets shot down KAL 007 and the House voted 416-0 to condemn this act of murder, Crock-

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ett alone abstained; in 1985, when the Soviets shot U.S. Major Arthur Nicholson in East Germany and denied him medical aid for forty-five minutes while he bled to death, Crockett voted against a House resolution of condemnation.

When the conservative spokesman, Michael Waller of the Center for Inter-American Security, concluded his summary of Crockett's record, there was a moment of uncomfortable silence, and then a reporter from *Newsweek* spoke up with a question that had obviously crossed the minds of other journalists in the room: "Isn't this sort of McCarthyism?" The invocation of this term in effect ended the press conference.

IT APPEARS, then, that even though we are nowadays closer to the naiveté of the 30's that saw Communism as "20th-century Americanism" than to the 50's view of it as absolute evil, there is still a taboo against mentioning the distant sympathies of someone like Senator Metzenbaum or questioning the more profound ties of someone like Congressman Crockett. (This reflex is so pervasive that it has been reified in the nation's political code: the Communist party is uniquely exempted from election-law requirements that campaign donors be identified, on the assumption that in this case they might be subjected to "McCarthyite" harassment.) Subversion and divided loyalties are now forbidden subjects in America's political culture. "Communist" and "fellow-traveler" are epithets that seem antique, almost comically grotesque. Nevertheless, the term McCarthyism retains the power of a political curse.

The apprehensions aroused by charges of McCarthyism are based on the assumption that there is a powerful and destructive impulse lurking just under the surface of our political life: a native fascism easily ignited and ready to rage dangerously out of control. It is an assumption not often questioned, although the evidence suggests that the opposite is true. Arthur Miller's efforts in *The Crucible* notwithstanding, the history of McCarthy shows the alien nature of the witch-hunt mentality to the American spirit and its superficial hold on the American psyche. Appearing in the extraordinary circumstances of the postwar period, McCarthyism was actually brief in its moment, limited in its consequences, and complete in its purgation from the body politic. The Wisconsin Senator's strut on the stage ended after only a few years in a crushing repudiation by his colleagues in the Senate and an enduring obloquy in the rogue's gallery of American history, a position close to that of Benedict Arnold and a handful of other villains. His enemies have survived to be rehabilitated as martyrs and heroes of an American political nightmare, while he himself is the only figure from that haunted era to suffer irreparable damnation.

Why then do we hear so much about McCarthyism in the contemporary political debate? Is there a real basis for the fear that we will return to that brief moment in the 1950's when this bizarre figure dominated our politics? Is there a legitimate worry that we will once again be victimized by a pathology which Harry Truman defined when he went on television to defend himself against the charge that he had protected Harry Dexter White (an official in his administration who had committed suicide after being named as a Soviet agent): the big lie and the reckless smear, the indiscriminate use of guilt by association, the disregard for due process?

If so, the danger exists less on the Right than on the Left which has integrated many of these techniques into its political repertory. In his column in the *Nation*, for example, Alexander Cockburn regularly accuses Robert Leiken, Ronald Radosh, and other experts on Central America who deny that the Sandinistas are building a utopia in Nicaragua of being *contra* hirelings or CIA agents. For his dissent on affirmative-action programs, the black economist Thomas Sowell has been labeled "an enemy of his people" by Roger Wilkins in the same radical journal. There was also the reaction on the liberal Left to the appointment of John H. Koehler as White House communications director earlier this year. Once it was discovered that Koehler, as a child of ten in his native Germany, had belonged briefly to a Nazi youth group, there was such a tremendous outcry that the White House was forced to withdraw his nomination, even though the head of the Anti-Defamation League observed that it was "ludicrous to judge a fifty-six-year-old person by his associations as a ten-year-old." Clearly, the famous question of the McCarthy period—"Are you now or have you ever been. . .?"—is out of bounds in the political debate only if what you are or were or might have been is a Communist.

In short, it is not the political *methods* of McCarthyism that arouse the indignation of those who invoke its specter today, but the political *ideas* with which McCarthy was associated, specifically his anti-Communism. This is admitted with disarming frankness by Ellen Schrecker in *No Ivory Tower*, her book about the effects of McCarthyism on the university: "After all, what made McCarthy a McCarthyite was not his bluster but his anti-Communist mission. . . ."

To dismiss McCarthy's malevolence as "bluster" seems fatuous, but there is a reason. What Professor Schrecker and others on the Left who have made McCarthy into a perverse version of a patron saint are saying is that the problem was not his demagogic lack of scruples or the psychological demons that sent him careening out of control, but the target of his crusade. For them, just as much as for the tiny band of zealots who gather every year at his grave on the anniversary of his death, Joseph McCarthy is a representative American. In life McCarthy was part of the Right. In

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death he has been possessed by the body-snatchers of the Left. His ghost is now summoned up not to underscore the importance of civil liberties in a democracy, but as part of a partisan morality play about the dangers of anti-Communism in general. To accuse someone of being a McCarthyite, therefore, has become a way of embargoing ideas that the Left dislikes and invoking cloture on debates —as, for instance, about the commitments of people like George Crockett—that it does not wish to have.

FROM this leftist perspective, McCarthyism preexisted McCarthy—it was the monstrous offspring of the Truman Doctrine. Because of internal-security measures and congressional investigations into subversion begun during his presidency, Truman was, in effect, a premature McCarthyite. Thus the leftist fable: once upon a time, American liberals embraced a cold-war philosophy and an anti-Communist strategy. The result was an indigenous strain of American fascism —McCarthyism. It is the fear of a repetition of this experience that animates the present liberal generation, and directs its vigilance away from the pregnant silences surrounding a George Crockett, and toward those who are suspicious of what these silences conceal.

Anti-Communism begets fascism: it is a logic that was developed by the Communist party itself. As soon as anti-Communism became the policy of the Truman administration, the Communists marched out of the Democratic party, where they had camped after the breakup of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and into the new Progressive party. Appealing to their former liberal allies, they warned that Truman's anti-Communist policies would lead inexorably to war abroad and fascism at home. One Communist party publication of the period was entitled "The Deadly Parallel." Disseminated in 1949, it juxtaposed two sets of photographs—one of Nazis rounding up first Communists and then Jews and shipping them to Auschwitz, the other of U.S. marshals escorting American Communists to their Smith Act trial and of a detention facility which was identified as a newly built "concentration camp." The message was simple and clear: the cold war that Truman had launched to oppose the global advance of Communism had put America on the road to Nazism. Communists first and then everyone else would fall under the iron boot.

It was one occasion when the Communists believed their own propaganda. When the Smith Act trial resulted in a guilty verdict, the party interpreted it as the beginnning of America's long totalitarian night and sent its leadership into the "underground" so that it would be ready to direct the struggle against the new Nazi order. The rank and file stayed put, denouncing Truman's initiation of security programs as the "internal" cold war required by his cold war abroad.

The sudden prominence of McCarthy following his famous speech of June 1950 in Wheeling, West Virginia (the one in which he claimed that he had a long list of Communists working in the State Department) seemed to confirm the theory of a connection between McCarthy and the anti-Communist liberalism of the Truman Democrats. This theory enabled later revisionist historians and writers like Lillian Hellman to tar them all with the brush of McCarthyism. It was, said Hellman, a "scoundrel time," a time of witch hunts in search of subversives and security risks who simply did not exist and of liberals who remained silent out of cowardice or secret approval.

The historical record shows just the opposite. The testimony of former Communists and KGB intelligence defectors, together with evidence revealed under the Freedom of Information Act, shows that the American Communist party throughout the entire period was indeed financed and directed by Moscow, and that it was devious in its political agendas, duplicitous in its public face, and conspiratorial in its organizational form. Members of the party like Judith Coplon and Julius Rosenberg did indeed spy for their Kremlin masters. Party loyalists like Alger Hiss did indeed attain positions of influence in areas of policy crucial to the Soviets' interest, while sympathizers like Owen Lattimore—later canonized as innocent victims of the witch hunt—used their positions to aid the Communists they secretly admired. The Communist witnesses who eventually invoked the Fifth Amendment before congressional committees, claiming to be progressives concerned about democracy and the Bill of Rights, were in fact members of an international conspiracy whose goal was to exploit the institutions of American democracy to serve the Soviet Union.

As a result of the security programs, many of these people lost their jobs in institutions considered vital to the nation's defense—in government, in the media, and in education. But with few exceptions they were not fired for holding "unpopular ideas," as the mythology that has grown up around McCarthy holds. They were fired for being members of (or for refusing to cooperate with inquiries into their membership in) an organization which was subservient to a hostile foreign power and whose purposes were inimical to American democracy and to the institutions they had infiltrated. Thus Columbia University justified its policy of excluding Communists from its faculty in the following statement: "Membership in Communist organizations almost certainly implies a submission to an intellectual control which is entirely at variance with the principles of academic competence as we understand them."

This is not to say that McCarthy's response was not destructive. In his hands, the struggle against this Communist fifth column was perverted into a weapon against the Democrats which eventually became a scattergun aimed at his own party, at

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America, and ultimately at himself. His reckless demagoguery did damage to innocent people and the atmosphere created by his success cast a pall over the political arena, imperiling the democratic process while also destroying the credibility of anti-Communism itself. Robert Lamphere, the head of the FBI counterintelligence team that caught the Rosenbergs, has since written: "Senator McCarthy's crusade . . . was always anathema to me. McCarthy's approach and tactics hurt the anti-Communist cause and turned many liberals against legitimate efforts to curtail Communist activities in the United States. . . ." So too Whittaker Chambers: ". . . All of us, to one degree or another, have come to question his judgment and to fear acutely that his flair for the sensational, his inaccuracies and distortions . . . will lead him and us into trouble. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that we live in terror that Senator McCarthy will one day make some blunder which will play directly into the hands of our common enemy and discredit the whole anti-Communist effort for a long while to come."

YET what is missing from the leftist mythology about the postwar era is the active role of the Communists themselves in creating the disastrous drama in which Joseph McCarthy starred. Why was the most notorious question of the era—"Are you now or have you ever been. . .?—asked in the first place? Because the Communists concealed who and what they were; because they presented themselves as "progressives" and patriots, even as their covert actions were revealing wholly different values and intentions. In this sense Max Eastman, former Trotskyist, was right when he said that "we are not dealing with fanatics of a new idea, willing to give testimony for their faith straightforwardly regardless of cost. We are dealing with conspirators who try to sneak in their Moscow-inspired propaganda by stealth and double-talk. . . ." And as William Phillips, the editor of *Partisan Review*, has noted (with considerable understatement), "some" of those pursued by McCarthy "*were* Communists and what one was being asked to do was to defend their right to lie about it."

In other words, the worst and most damaging aspects of McCarthyism—the poisonous effect on the democratic process resulting from blurred distinctions between liberals and Communists—was a problem that had been created in the first place by the Communists themselves. It was they who hid their anti-democratic and anti-American agendas and commitments behind "liberal" fronts and façades. If there was an interest in ferreting Communists out of liberal institutions, it was not because the fascist genie had escaped from the unstoppered bottle of American paranoia, but because Communists had infiltrated these institutions in the first place. If the difference between liberalism and Communism was sometimes difficult to detect, it was because the Communists had cynically used liberalism as protective coloration for the better part of a decade. If Alger Hiss, the Rosenbergs, and other Communist agents had acknowledged their commitments, could there have been a McCarthy?

The experience of the radical 60's suggests that the answer is no. Rarely during this period was there any concern on the Left over a resurgence of McCarthyism. This cannot, however, be ascribed to any lack of "subversive" activity, which in the 60's may well have exceeded anything in the past. Nor can it be attributed to the absence of an anti-Communist Right, which was in fact gathering momentum through the Goldwater wing of the Republican party. The reason lies, rather, in the temporarily changed nature of the Left itself.

By a coincidence of fate, in 1957, the same year that McCarthy died in disgrace, the Old Left disintegrated under the pressure of Khrushchev's revelations concerning the crimes of Stalin and the Soviets' brutal invasion of Hungary. A New Left, impressed by the debacle and anxious not to be involved in a repetition, soon appeared. This New Left had many faults, but lack of candor was not one of them. Where Old Leftists had pretended to be progressives and liberals, New Leftists insisted on being recognized as Marxists and revolutionaries, pro-Castro and pro-Vietcong, up against the wall and tear the mother down. They would not have dreamed of concealing their radical agendas in the clothing of liberalism; indeed, to them the worst of all fates was to be mistaken for liberals.

The New Left did not want to infiltrate institutions in the American mainstream with whose purposes it was openly at war and whose ends it intended to subvert; the New Left wanted to create its own institutions and to make "a revolution in the streets." It was redundant, as government agencies soon discovered, to interrogate New Left radicals about who they were because they made no bones about it. Whereas Old Leftists had donned the cloak of the liberal martyr who is ruefully silent before his inquisitors out of shame for the offense they commit against liberty itself, New Leftists yanked those who threatened to investigate them into their own Theater of the Absurd. Hence Jerry Rubin's appearance in knee breeches and tricornered hat—American Revolutionary drag—before the decrepit and obsolete House Un-American Activities Committee. When asked about his subversive agenda he said he was a revolutionary and proud of it. And that was that. When the witch admits to being a witch, there is no hunt. The McCarthyism of the 50's ended in the 60's not as tragedy but as farce.

THIS was not, however, the final chapter of the story; there was another twist that was yet to come.

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When the revolution in the streets for which the New Left yearned failed to happen, most of its members disappeared—into health foods, jogging, business school, entrepreneurship, and yuppiedom. But the hard core that remained was suddenly overcome by an irresistible nostalgia for the Old Left they had once scorned as politically devious and ideologically ossified. Their own movement had burned itself out in mythomania and histrionics, and in narcissistic fantasies of violence. The Communists of the 30's, on the other hand, now seemed admirable for exactly the quality that had once seemed so despicable—their obstinate and ruthless loyalty—because they had managed to stay the leftist course, because of the durability of their commitments. Whereas during the 60's they had been scorned as hacks always trying to infiltrate New Left organizations and then trying to moderate the violent spontaneity of their younger successors, the Communists were now seen in a new light—as determined foot-soldiers of progressivism who had fought the good fight, who had experienced defeat, disappointment, and even betrayal, but who had also learned how to survive and who thus might be good models for what was left of the Left.

One pathetic image which crystallizes this change came in 1971 when the leaders of the violent Weatherman faction of the SDS, isolated and disheartened by their early experience in the underground, sat at the knees of a Communist party leader, Annie Stein, mother of one of them, and got a short course in Marx according to the authorized version of Joseph Stalin.

By themselves, a small and already defeated group of radicals trying to engineer a new attitude toward Communists would not have rippled the national consensus. But large numbers of liberals, mired in a self-lacerating post-Vietnam tristesse, joined in the revisionist mood. Indeed, to many liberals this war had come to seem an extension of the anti-Communist crusade of Harry Truman, and they now began wondering whether the Old Left might not have been right all along about the immorality of that entire policy abroad and the threat it posed to civil liberties at home. If Vietnam had not brought fascism, as Tom Hayden and other radicals had predicted with glib enthusiasm at the end of the 60's, it had unveiled, in the Watergate debacle, a crisis which made such possibilities seem less fanciful.

Out of these feelings was born the public rehabilitation of the discredited old Stalinists—a feat accomplished in books of the 70's and early 80's like Vivian Gornick's *The Romance of American Communism* and Victor Navasky's *Naming Names*, mainstream films like *The Front* and *The Way We Were*, and documentaries like *The Good Fight* and *Seeing Red*. Here all the old agitprop moralities were again on display as part of a "reassessment" of the cold-war era. The Communists were presented as they had once presented themselves—as persecuted defenders of American democracy, hapless victims of American fascism. The villains in this melodrama were not only, or even primarily, the troglodytes of the Right; they also included the liberals who had tried to protect their organizations from Communist infiltration. These anti-Communist liberals, already on the verge of extinction as a result of the takeover of the Democratic party by the McGovern movement in 1972, were now subjected to a furious attack for their alleged collusion with or cowardly acquiescence in McCarthyism.

The bible of this new morality was Lillian Hellman's memoir *Scoundrel Time* (1976). Hellman portrayed herself, and was canonized, as a martyr, one who had stood up and said no in thunder during the dark days ruled by McCarthy. "I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions": the sentence would be much quoted by sycophantic reviewers who ignored the fact that Hellman had for many years cut her conscience to fit Stalin's fashions. She postured as an innocent and naïf, someone who might have been in Moscow during the worst moments of Stalin's purge trials of the 30's but knew nothing about them. Yet this had not stopped her, in fact, from signing an ad defending the trials or, shortly before the alliance between Hitler and Stalin was concluded, from joining a group of American intellectuals who denounced the "fantastic falsehood" that the USSR was no different from other totalitarian states.

Again, as with Soviet agents like Hiss and the Rosenbergs, if self-styled "progressives" like Hellman had not earlier apologized for Stalinism or maintained a disgraceful silence about its homicidal nature, there would not have been a field on which a McCarthy could have played.

But in conjuring up the specter of McCarthyism, Hellman and others were doing more than seeking vindication and turning a past defeat into a present triumph. The exhumation of McCarthy was also a way of putting the political culture under discipline so that it would be helpless against the renaissance of "progressive" politics that was looming on the horizon, and so that it would be incapable of confronting the Communists and other elements of the hard-core Left who were once again parading as liberals.

It was strange timing. The American reality of the late 70's was as far from a "new McCarthyism" as one could imagine. The lessons of Vietnam and Watergate held that America had no real enemies in the world out there but was threatened only by phantasms created by its cold-war paranoia. Thus the FBI was now barred from putting under surveillance even those political groups whose agendas indicated an intention to engage in illegal and violent acts—like Weatherman before it went underground. As a result, this group of fanatics

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was able to carry out a string of successful armed robberies to finance its revolution and to murder three innocent people in an abortive attempt on a Brinks armored car in upstate New York.

Even with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, no anti-Communist vigilantes were visible in the political landscape, no retribution was demanded for a war that had been lost at home far more than on the battlefield. The reality was rather that of a nation overwhelmed to the point of paralysis by feelings of futility and guilt; a nation disarmed by self-doubt and vulnerable to strange creeds.

Meanwhile the global offensive that the Communists launched after America's defeat in Vietnam had swept fourteen nations on three continents into the Soviet orbit, continuing its advance even to the Central American land mass. And just as the popular-front progressives of an earlier period had joined in a "peace" movement to oppose the Truman administration's efforts to contain Stalin's expansion in Eastern Europe, so in the 80's leftists rallied in a popular front to frustrate the Reagan administration's resistance to Communist expansion in the Americas. In 1980 officials of the American Communist party working with Communist agents from Nicaragua and El Salvador established a "solidarity network" across the United States to support the Communists in Central America. With the help of a patchwork of "human-rights" groups, a powerful lobby was created which was able to exert enough influence on Congress to cut off aid to the *contras* for a crucial period, leading eventually to the Iran-*contra* crisis. One of the groups, the Pledge of Resistance, mobilized 100,000 signatories across the country who promised to break the law, if necessary, to defend the Communist forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

About the time that Buchanan was being roundly condemned in Washington as a McCarthyite for his statement on the *contra* vote, a political rally was held on the West Coast which showed how different the political atmosphere of the 80's was from that of the 50's. The occasion for the rally was a Marxist Scholars Conference in Seattle organized by the American Communist party. It was addressed by the dean of American Communist intellectuals, Herbert Aptheker, who for over a half century had proven himself one of the most servile apologists for the Soviet state. Having previously signed the Pledge of Resistance, Aptheker now signed it again publicly, urging the assembled professors to do likewise, to return to their campuses and become involved in "imaginative action . . . interfering with the armed forces, interfering with maneuvers, doing everything possible" to oppose the efforts of their own government to stop the Communist advance. Yet so effective had the fear of McCarthyism become that this speech, which once would have been taken as a blatant incitement to sedition, passed unnoticed and uncriticized.

THE term "McCarthyism" as it is used today is thus not a reality recalled, but a political blunt instrument, an aggressive symbol forcibly deforming our view of the world. McCarthyism no longer means character assassination and reckless disregard for due process. It is now equated with anti-Communism itself and is invoked to interdict discussion.

Thus has a spell been cast on American political discourse. Under this spell we censor ourselves and become incapable of speaking openly and honestly about a crucial aspect of our political culture. Under this spell we are led to believe that the only real enemy our country has is its own malignant self—which is, of course, exactly what those on the Left who have resurrected McCarthy believe and what they are working, with considerable success, to get the rest of us to believe as well.

There is a way to break this spell. It is necessary only to consider the contrast between today and the era when McCarthy's exaggerations of the security problem permanently removed it from the national agenda. Then the problem of Communist expansion was confined to Eastern Europe and Asia; now it has spread to the American land mass itself. Then the United States was far more powerful than the Soviet Union; now the Soviets are on the point of achieving—if indeed they have not already achieved—military superiority. Then the "progressives" who apologized for the Soviet Union were isolated in a rump outside the two-party system; now apologists for Communist dictatorships are inside the Democratic party and at the center of the system itself. Then McCarthy was an enemy of Communism; now McCarthy is Communism's best friend.

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On Being Black and Middle Class

Shelby Steele

Not long ago a friend of mine, black like myself, said to me that the term "black middle class" was actually a contradiction in terms. Race, he insisted, blurred class distinctions among blacks. If you were black, you were just black and that was that. When I argued, he let his eyes roll at my naiveté. Then he went on. For us, as black professionals, it was an exercise in self-flattery, a pathetic pretension, to give meaning to such a distinction. Worse, the very idea of class threatened the unity that was vital to the black community as a whole. After all, since when had white America taken note of anything but color when it came to blacks? He then reminded me of an old Malcolm X line that had been popular in the 60's. Question: What is a black man with a Ph.D.? Answer: A nigger.

For many years I had been on my friend's side of this argument. Much of my conscious thinking on the old conundrum of race and class was shaped during my high-school and college years in the race-charged 60's, when the fact of my race took on an almost religious significance. Progressively, from the mid-60's on, more and more aspects of my life found their explanation, their justification, and their motivation in race. My youthful concerns about career, romance, money, values, and even styles of dress became subject to consultation with various oracular sources of racial wisdom. And these ranged from a figure as ennobling as Martin Luther King, Jr. to the underworld elegance of dress I found in jazz clubs on the South Side of Chicago. Everywhere there were signals, and in those days I considered myself so blessed with clarity and direction that I pitied my white classmates who found more embarrassment than guidance in the fact of *their* race. In 1968, inflated by my new power, I took a mischievous delight in calling them culturally disadvantaged.

But now, hearing my friend's comment was like hearing a priest from a church I'd grown disenchanted with. I understood him, but my faith was weak. What had sustained me in the 60's sounded monotonous and off-the-mark in the 80's. For me, race had lost much of its juju, its singular capacity to conjure meaning. And today, when I honestly look at my life and the lives of many other middle-class blacks I know, I can see that race never fully explained our situation in American society. Black though I may be, it is impossible for me to sit in my single-family house with two cars in the driveway and a swing set in the back yard and *not* see the role class has played in my life. And how can my friend, similarly raised and similarly situated, not see it?

Yet despite my certainty I felt a sharp tug of guilt as I tried to explain myself over my friend's skepticism. He is a man of many comedic facial expressions and, as I spoke, his brow lifted in extreme moral alarm as if I were uttering the unspeakable. His clear implication was that I was being elitist and possibly (dare he suggest?) anti-black—crimes for which there might well be no redemption. He pretended to fear for me. I chuckled along with him, but inwardly I did wonder at myself. Though I never doubted the validity of what I was saying, I felt guilty saying it. Why?

After he left (to retrieve his daughter from a dance lesson) I realized that the trap I felt myself in had a tiresome familiarity and, in a sort of slow-motion epiphany, I began to see its outline. It was like the suddenly sharp vision one has at the end of a burdensome marriage when all the long-repressed incompatibilities come undeniably to light.

What became clear to me is that people like myself, my friend, and middle-class blacks generally are caught in a very specific double bind that keeps two equally powerful elements of our identity at odds with each other. The middle-class values by which we were raised—the work ethic, the importance of education, the value of property ownership, of respectability, of "getting ahead," of stable family life, of initiative, of self-reliance, etc.—are, in themselves, raceless and even assimilationist. They urge us toward participation in the American mainstream, toward integration, toward a strong identification with the society—and toward the entire constellation of

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qualities that are implied in the word individualism. These values are almost rules for how to prosper in a democratic, free-enterprise society that admires and rewards individual effort. They tell us to work hard for ourselves and our families and to seek our opportunities whenever they appear, inside or outside the confines of whatever ethnic group we may belong to.

But the particular pattern of racial identification that emerged in the 60's and that still prevails today urges middle-class blacks (and all blacks) in the opposite direction. This pattern asks us to see ourselves as an embattled minority, and it urges an adversarial stance toward the mainstream, an emphasis on ethnic consciousness over individualism. It is organized around an implied separatism.

The opposing thrust of these two parts of our identity results in the double bind of middle-class blacks. There is no forward movement on either plane that does not constitute backward movement on the other. This was the familiar trap I felt myself in while talking with my friend. As I spoke about class, his eyes reminded me that I was betraying race. Clearly, the two indispensable parts of my identity were a threat to one another.

Of course when you think about it, class and race are both similar in some ways and also naturally opposed. They are two forms of collective identity with boundaries that intersect. But whether they clash or peacefully coexist has much to do with how they are defined. Being both black and middle-class becomes a double bind when class and race are defined in sharply antagonistic terms, so that one must be repressed to appease the other.

But what is the "substance" of these two identities, and how does each establish itself in an individual's overall identity? It seems to me that when we identify with any collective we are basically identifying with images that tell us what it means to be a member of that collective. Identity is not the same thing as the fact of membership in a collective; it is, rather, a form of self-definition, facilitated by images of what we wish our membership in the collective to mean. In this sense, the images we identify with may reflect the aspirations of the collective more than they reflect reality, and their content can vary with shifts in those aspirations.

But the process of identification is usually dialectical. It is just as necessary to say what we are *not* as it is to say what we are—so that finally identification comes about by embracing a polarity of positive and negative images. To identify as middle-class, for example, I must have both positive and negative images of what being middle-class entails; then I will know what I should and should not be doing in order to be middle-class. The same goes for racial identity.

In the racially turbulent 60's the polarity of images that came to define racial identification was very antagonistic to the polarity that defined middle-class identification. One might say that the positive images of one lined up with the negative images of the other, so that to identify with both required either a contortionist's flexibility or a dangerous splitting of the self. The double bind of the black middle class was in place.

THE black middle class has always defined its class identity by means of positive images gleaned from middle- and upper-class white society, and by means of negative images of lower-class blacks. This habit goes back to the institution of slavery itself, when "house" slaves both mimicked the whites they served and held themselves above the "field" slaves. But in the 60's the old bourgeois impulse to dissociate from the lower classes (the "we-they" distinction) backfired when racial identity suddenly called for the celebration of this same black lower class. One of the qualities of a double bind is that one feels it more than sees it, and I distinctly remember the tension and strange sense of dishonesty I felt in those days as I moved back and forth like a bigamist between the demands of class and race.

Though my father was born poor, he achieved middle-class standing through much hard work and sacrifice (one of his favorite words) and by identifying fully with solid middle-class values—mainly hard work, family life, property ownership, and education for his children (all four of whom have advanced degrees). In his mind these were not so much values as laws of nature. People who embodied them made up the positive images in his class polarity. The negative images came largely from the blacks he had left behind because they were "going nowhere."

No one in my family remembers how it happened, but as time went on, the negative images congealed into an imaginary character named Sam who, from the extensive service we put him to, quickly grew to mythic proportions. In our family lore he was sometimes a trickster, sometimes a boob, but always possessed of a catalogue of sly faults that gave up graphic images of everything we should not be. On sacrifice: "Sam never thinks about tomorrow. He wants it now or he doesn't care about it." On work: "Sam doesn't favor it too much." On children: "Sam likes to have them but not to raise them." On money: "Sam drinks it up and pisses it out." On fidelity: "Sam has to have two or three women." On clothes: "Sam features loud clothes. He likes to see and be seen." And so on. Sam's persona amounted to a negative instruction manual in class identity.

I don't think that any of us believed Sam's faults were accurate representations of lower-class black life. He was an instrument of self-definition, not of sociological accuracy. It never occurred to us that he looked very much like the white racist stereotype of blacks, or that he might have been a

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manifestation of our own racial self-hatred. He simply gave us a counterpoint against which to express our aspirations. If self-hatred was a factor, it was not, for us, a matter of hating lower-class blacks but of hating what we did not want to be.

Still, hate or love aside, it is fundamentally true that my middle-class identity involved a dissociation from images of lower-class black life and a corresponding identification with values and patterns of responsibility that are common to the middle class everywhere. These values sent me a clear message: be both an individual and a responsible citizen, understand that the quality of your life will approximately reflect the quality of effort you put into it, know that individual responsibility is the basis of freedom and that the limitations imposed by fate (whether fair or unfair) are no excuse for passivity.

Whether I live up to these values or not, I know that my acceptance of them is the result of lifelong conditioning. I know also that I share this conditioning with middle-class people of all races and that I can no more easily be free of it than I can be free of my race. Whether all this got started because the black middle class modeled itself on the white middle class is no longer relevant. For the middle-class black, conditioned by these values from birth, the sense of meaning they provide is as immutable as the color of his skin.

I STARTED the 60's in high school feeling that my class-conditioning was the surest way to overcome racial barriers. My racial identity was pretty much taken for granted. After all, it was obvious to the world that I was black. Yet I ended the 60's in graduate school a little embarrassed by my class background and with an almost desperate need to be "black." The tables had turned. I knew very clearly (though I struggled to repress it) that my aspirations and my sense of how to operate in the world came from my class background, yet "being black" required certain attitudes and stances that made me feel secretly a little duplicitous. The inner compatibility of class and race I had known in 1960 was gone.

For blacks, the decade between 1960 and 1969 saw racial identification undergo the same sort of transformation that national identity undergoes in times of war. It became more self-conscious, more narrowly focused, more prescribed, less tolerant of opposition. It spawned an implicit party line, which tended to disallow competing forms of identity. Race-as-identity was lifted from the relative slumber it knew in the 50's and pressed into service in a social and political war against oppression. It was redefined along sharp adversarial lines and directed toward the goal of mobilizing the great mass of black Americans in this warlike effort. It was imbued with a strong moral authority, useful for denouncing those who opposed it and for celebrating those who honored it as a positive achivement rather than a mere birthright.

The form of racial identification that quickly evolved to meet this challenge presented blacks as a racial monolith, a singular people with a common experience of oppression. Differences within the race, no matter how ineradicable, had to be minimized. Class distinctions were one of the first such differences to be sacrified, since they not only threatened racial unity but also seemed to stand in contradiction to the principle of equality which was the announced goal of the movement for racial progress. The discomfort I felt in 1969, the vague but relentless sense of duplicity, was the result of a historical necessity that put my race and class at odds, that was asking me to cast aside the distinction of my class and identify with a monolithic view of my race.

If the form of this racial identity was the monolith, its substance was victimization. The civil-rights movement and the more radical splinter groups of the late 60's were all dedicated to ending racial victimization, and the form of black identity that emerged to facilitate this goal made blackness and victimization virtually synonymous. Since it was our victimization more than any other variable that identified and unified us, moreover, it followed logically that the purest black was the poor black. It was images of him that clustered around the positive pole of the race polarity; all other blacks were, in effect, required to identify with him in order to confirm their own blackness.

Certainly there were more dimensions to the black experience than victimization, but no other had the same capacity to fire the indignation needed for war. So, again out of historical necessity, victimization became the overriding focus of racial identity. But this only deepened the double bind for middle-class blacks like me. When it came to class we were accustomed to defining ourselves against lower-class blacks and identifying with at least the values of middle-class whites; when it came to race we were now being asked to identify with images of lower-class blacks and to see whites, middle-class or otherwise, as victimizers. Negative lining up with positive, we were called upon to reject what we had previously embraced and to embrace what we had previously rejected. To put it still more personally, the Sam figure I had been raised to define myself against had now become the "real" black I was expected to identify with.

The fact that the poor black's new status was only passively earned by the condition of his victimization, not by assertive, positive action, made little difference. Status was status apart from the means by which it was achieved, and along with it came a certain power—the power to define the terms of access to that status, to say who was black and who was not. If a lower-class black said you were not really "black"—a sell-out, an Uncle Tom —the judgment was all the more devastating be-

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cause it carried the authority of his status. And this judgment soon enough came to be accepted by many whites as well.

In graduate school I was once told by a white professor, "Well, but . . . you're not really black. I mean, you're not disadvantaged." In his mind my lack of victim status disqualified me from the race itself. More recently I was complimented by a black student for speaking reasonably correct English, "proper" English as he put it. "But I don't know if I really want to talk like that," he went on. "Why not?" I asked. "Because then I wouldn't be black no more," he replied without a pause.

To overcome his marginal status, the middle-class black had to identify with a degree of victimization that was beyond his actual experience. In college (and well beyond) we used to play a game called "nap matching." It was a game of one-upmanship, in which we sat around outdoing each other with stories of racial victimization, symbolically measured by the naps of our hair. Most of us were middle-class and so had few personal stories to relate, but if we could not match naps with our own biographies, we would move on to those legendary tales of victimization that came to us from the public domain.

The single story that sat atop the pinnacle of racial victimization for us was that of Emmett Till, the Northern black teen-ager who, on a visit to the South in 1955, was killed and grotesquely mutilated for supposedly looking at or whistling at (we were never sure which, though we argued the point endlessly) a white woman. Oh, how we probed his story, finding in his youth and Northern upbringing the quintessential embodiment of black innocence, brought down by a white evil so portentous and apocalyptic, so gnarled and hideous, that it left us with a feeling not far from awe. By telling his story and others like it, we came to *feel* the immutability of our victimization, its utter indigenousness, as a thing on this earth like dirt or sand or water.

Of course, these sessions were a ritual of group identification, a means by which we, as middle-class blacks, could be at one with our race. But why were we, who had only a moderate experience of victimization (and that offset by opportunities our parents never had), so intent on assimilating or appropriating an identity that in so many ways contradicted our own? Because, I think, the sense of innocence that is always entailed in feeling victimized filled us with a corresponding feeling of entitlement, or even license, that helped us endure our vulnerability on a largely white college campus.

In my junior year in college I rode to a debate tournament with three white students and our faculty coach, an elderly English professor. The experience of being the lone black in a group of whites was so familiar to me that I thought nothing of it as our trip began. But then halfway through the trip the professor casually turned to me and, in an isn't-the-world-funny sort of tone, said that he had just refused to rent an apartment in a house he owned to a "very nice" black couple because their color would "offend" the white couple who lived downstairs. His eyebrows lifted helplessly over his hawkish nose, suggesting that he too, like me, was a victim of America's racial farce. His look assumed a kind of comradeship: he and I were above this grimy business of race, though for expediency we had occasionally to concede the world its madness.

My vulnerability in this situation came not so much from the professor's blindness to his own racism as from his assumption that I would participate in it, that I would conspire with him against my own race so that he might remain comfortably blind. Why did he think I would be amenable to this? I can only guess that he assumed my middle-class identity was so complete and all-encompassing that I would see his action as nothing more than a trifling concession to the folkways of our land, that I would in fact applaud his decision not to disturb propriety. Blind to both his own racism and to me—one blindness serving the other—he could not recognize that he was asking me to betray my race in the name of my class.

His blindness made me feel vulnerable because it threatened to expose my own repressed ambivalence. His comment pressured me to choose between my class identification, which had contributed to my being a college student and a member of the debating team, and my desperate desire to be "black." I could have one but not both; I was double-bound.

Because double binds are repressed there is always an element of terror in them: the terror of bringing to the conscious mind the buried duplicity, self-deception, and pretense involved in serving two masters. This terror is the stuff of vulnerability, and since vulnerability is one of the least tolerable of all human feelings, we usually transform it into an emotion that seems to restore the control of which it has robbed us; most often, that emotion is anger. And so, before the professor had even finished his little story, I had become a furnace of rage. The year was 1967, and I had been primed by endless hours of nap-matching to feel, at least consciously, completely at one with the victim-focused black identity. This identity gave me the license, and the impunity, to unleash upon this professor one of those volcanic eruptions of racial indignation familiar to us from the novels of Richard Wright. Like Cross Damon in *Outsider*, who kills in perfectly righteous anger, I tried to annihilate the man. I punished him not according to the measure of his crime but according to the measure of my vulnerability, a measure set by the cumulative tension of years of repressed terror. Soon I saw that terror in

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his face, as he stared hollow-eyed at the road ahead. My white friends in the back seat, knowing no conflict between their own class and race, were astonished that someone they had taken to be so much like themselves could harbor a rage that for all the world looked murderous.

Though my rage was triggered by the professor's comment, it was deepened and sustained by a complex of need, conflict, and repression in myself of which I had been wholly unaware. Out of my racial vulnerability I had developed the strong need of an identity with which to defend myself. The only such identity available was that of me as victim, him as victimizer. Once in the grip of this paradigm, I began to do far more damage to myself than he had done.

Seeing myself as a victim meant that I clung all the harder to my racial identity which, in turn, meant that I suppressed my class identity. This cut me off from all the resources my class values might have offered me. In those values, for instance, I might have found the means to a more dispassionate response, the response less of a victim attacked by a victimizer than of an individual offended by a foolish old man. As an individual I might have reported this professor to the college dean. Or I might have calmly tried to reveal his blindness to him, and possibly won a convert. (The flagrancy of his remark suggested a hidden guilt and even self-recognition on which I might have capitalized. Doesn't confession usually signal a willingness to face oneself?) Or I might have simply chuckled and then let my silence serve as an answer to his provocation. Would not my composure, in any form it might take, deflect into his own heart the arrow he'd shot at me?

Instead, my anger, itself the hair-trigger expression of a long-repressed double bind, not only cut me off from the best of my own resources, it also distorted the nature of my true racial problem. The righteousness of this anger and the easy catharsis it brought buoyed the delusion of my victimization and left me as blind as the professor himself.

As a middle-class black I have often felt myself *contriving* to be "black." And I have noticed this same contrivance in others—a certain stretching away from the natural flow of one's life to align oneself with a victim-focused black identity. Our particular needs are out of sync with the form of identity available to meet those needs. Middle-class blacks need to identify racially; it is better to think of ourselves as black and victimized than not black at all; so we contrive (more unconsciously than consciously) to fit ourselves into an identity that denies our class and fails to address the true source of our vulnerability.

For me this once meant spending inordinate amounts of time at black faculty meetings, though these meetings had little to do with my real racial anxieties or my professional life. I was new to the university, one of two blacks in an English department of over seventy, and I felt a little isolated and vulnerable, though I did not admit it to myself. But at these meetings we discussed the problems of black faculty and students within a framework of victimization. The real vulnerability we felt was covered over by all the adversarial drama the victim/victimized polarity inspired, and hence went unseen and unassuaged. And this, I think, explains our rather chronic ineffectiveness as a group. Since victimization was not our primary problem—the university had long ago opened its doors to us—we had to contrive to make it so, and there is not much energy in contrivance. What I got at these meetings was ultimately an object lesson in how fruitless struggle can be when it is not grounded in actual need.

At our black faculty meetings, the old equation of blackness with victimization was ever present—to be black was to be a victim; therefore, not to be a victim was not to be black. As we contrived to meet the terms of this formula there was an inevitable distortion of both ourselves and the larger university. Through the prism of victimization the university seemed more impenetrable than it actually was, and we more limited in our powers. We fell prey to the victim's myopia, making the university an institution from which we could seek redress but which we could never fully join. And this mind-set often led us to look more for compensations for our supposed victimization than for opportunities we could pursue as individuals.

The discomfort and vulnerability felt by middle-class blacks in the 60's, it could be argued, was a worthwhile price to pay considering the progress achieved during that time of racial confrontation. But what may have been tolerable then is intolerable now. Though changes in American society have made it an anachronism, the monolithic form of racial identification that came out of the 60's is still very much with us. It may be more loosely held, and its power to punish heretics has probably diminished, but it continues to catch middle-class blacks in a double bind, thus impeding not only their own advancement but even, I would contend, that of blacks as a group.

The victim-focused black identity encourages the individual to feel that his advancement depends almost entirely on that of the group. Thus he loses sight not only of his own possibilities but of the inextricable connection between individual effort and individual advancement. This is a profound encumbrance today, when there is more opportunity for blacks than ever before, for it reimposes limitations that can have the same oppressive effect as those the society has only recently begun to remove.

It was the emphasis on mass action in the 60's

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that made the victim-focused black identity a necessity. But in the 80's and beyond, when racial advancement will come only through a multitude of individual advancements, this form of identity inadvertently adds itself to the forces that hold us back. Hard work, education, individual initiative, stable family life, property ownership—these have always been the means by which ethnic groups have moved ahead in America. Regardless of past or present victimization, these "laws" of advancement apply absolutely to black Americans also. There is no getting around this. What we need is a form of racial identity that energizes the individual by putting him in touch with both his possibilities and his responsibilities.

It has always annoyed me to hear from the mouths of certain arbiters of blackness that middle-class blacks should "reach back" and pull up those blacks less fortunate than they—as though middle-class status were an unearned and essentially passive condition in which one needed a large measure of noblesse oblige to occupy one's time. My own image is of reaching back from a moving train to lift on board those who have no tickets. A noble enough sentiment—but might it not be wiser to show them the entire structure of principles, effort, and sacrifice that puts one in a position to buy a ticket any time one likes? This, I think, is something members of the black middle class can realistically offer to other blacks. Their example is not only a testament to possibility but also a lesson in method. But they cannot lead by example until they are released from a black identity that regards that example as suspect, that sees them as "marginally" black, indeed that holds *them* back by catching them in a double bind.

To move beyond the victim-focused black identity we must learn to make a difficult but crucial distinction: between actual victimization, which we must resist with every resource, and identification with the victim's status. Until we do this we will continue to wrestle more with ourselves than with the new opportunities which so many paid so dearly to win.

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Hollywood Goes to Vietnam

George Szamuely

As soon as *Platoon*, Oliver Stone's movie about the Vietnam war, was released a year ago, it was showered with praise. Critics commended it for its unsparing realism; columnists exulted over the coincidence of its timing, just at a nadir in the fortunes of the Reagan presidency; editorial writers applauded its rejection of the "glamorization" of war which they identified with Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo*. In no time at all Stone's film became the subject of innumerable feature articles, cover stories, and television programs. Correspondents who had reported on the war from Vietnam as well as soldiers who had fought in it raised their voices to endorse the claim that now, almost twenty years later, we were seeing the Vietnam war "as it really was." In due course *Platoon* was awarded four Oscars (including those for best director and for best movie of 1986), earned well over $100 million at the box office, and seemed ready to enter the pantheon as, in David Halberstam's words, "both a great American movie and a great war movie."

Though the maker of *Platoon* was a man whose other credits included a didactic treatment of the conflicts in Central America, with Ronald Reagan's foreign policy cast as the heavy, few reviewers dissented from Stanley Kauffmann's judgment (in the *New Republic*) that *Platoon* itself was "genuinely apolitical." To be sure, the movie's most memorable features were the sight of young Americans being blown to pieces and scenes of demoralized soldiers murdering one another for want of a readily targetable enemy, but whose fault was that? As Oliver Stone explained in accepting his Oscar, he had made his film so as to prevent the occurrence of another tragedy like Vietnam. So laudable an aim could not possibly be described as "political."

Three more Vietnam films followed hard on the heels of *Platoon* in 1987: John Irvin's *Hamburger Hill*, Lionel Chetwynd's *The Hanoi Hilton*, and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*. If the critical consensus by the end of the year was that, of the four, Oliver Stone's was the one to get things about right, this was not because of any distinctive choice of subject matter or uniqueness of scene and action. On the contrary, Stone's infantry platoon engaged in "search-and-destroy" missions near the Cambodian border in 1967 has its exact analogue in *Hamburger Hill* in the assault by units of the 101st Airborne Division on Dong Ap Bia in May 1969—an action which, like that in *Platoon*, issues in the virtual annihilation of everyone who takes part in it. *The Hanoi Hilton* similarly conveys the face of defeat, in this case by detailing with excruciating vividness all the tortures and humiliations inflicted on captured American servicemen in the infamous Hoa Lo prison in Hanoi. As for Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, the one sustained action sequence in that film also involves the near-decimation of an American military unit, this time of Marines, at the hands of a lone sniper. As in *Platoon*, scenes suggesting a low level of morale, discipline, and combat effectiveness are also to be found in both *Hamburger Hill* and *Full Metal Jacket*. Where Oliver Stone has his men smoking pot, falling asleep on guard duty, and running away from the enemy, Stanley Kubrick's highly trained Marines disobey orders, are unable to read maps properly, and recklessly endanger their own and just about everyone else's lives.

In fact all four films, though far from the robust tradition of *Stalag 17*, *The Longest Day*, or *The Battle of the Bulge*, are entirely about men in combat or in captivity; none makes an explicit attempt to enter into questions of ideology or even of strategy. Instead, their moral and visual force derives precisely from their depiction of young Americans getting killed or captured in a "meaningless," "unwinnable" war. In this they certainly articulate today's "apolitical" view of the Vietnam war.

For the divisive debates over Vietnam are now very much a thing of the past. No one any longer bothers to extol the virtues of the North Vietnamese. No one bothers to deny the fact of Communist atrocities. Very few will even question the assertion that the mildly authoritarian regime of a Thieu or a Diem was infinitely preferable to what subsequently befell the people of the South. Yet the American endeavor to prevent or postpone that fate falls under no retrospective justification. In these recent movies the simple fact that young American men were turned into bloody pulps seems to be enough to condemn the undertaking. Even the dread

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Rambo is concerned not with the whys and wherefores of the ten-year American involvement but merely with the task of getting imprisoned soldiers out of Vietnam.

One should be precise about the shift in attitudes toward the war that has taken place and that is reflected in *Platoon*, *Hamburger Hill*, and (to a lesser extent) *Full Metal Jacket*. It is not that the American venture is considered any the less absurd or even immoral than before, but whereas one once heard much about Western imperialism, or about the criminal killing of Asians by white men, now one hears more and more about the fate of the unfortunate GIs who had to endure the terrible hardships of the swamps of Southeast Asia, with neither rewards, nor thanks, nor even any sense of self-esteem to keep them going. Forgotten about or reviled during the war by the public back home, by the media, by their own senior officers, by the politicians, the American GIs have lately emerged as victims rather than as villains of the typical Vietnam scenario.

What they are not, however, is heroes. Just as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington refrains from commemorating the deaths of American *soldiers*, but merely records the demise of some 58,000 individual Americans, thereby rendering their dying as pointless as if it had been caused by a succession of air crashes, so the story of the Vietnam war as reflected in recent movies has become the story of a ghastly mistake, in consequence of which a lot of young men had been compelled to pay, "meaninglessly," with their lives or limbs. The point is reinforced in all four films by the use of largely unknown actors whose "deaths" will inevitably carry for the audience the suggestion of indiscriminate slaughter.

In choosing thus to characterize the war in Indochina, the films simply collapse at least ten years of American involvement into a single "Vietnam experience," each of whose individual bits and pieces must carry a full load of significance. In these films it does not seem to matter very much whether the action takes place in 1967 (*Platoon*), in 1968 (*Full Metal Jacket*), in 1969 (*Hamburger Hill*), or over nine years of captivity in North Vietnam (*The Hanoi Hilton*). The effect is as if one were to make a film about the overall experience of British fighting men in World War II based solely on the rout at Dunkirk in 1940.

THIS, as it happens, is what Oliver Stone tries to do in *Platoon*. Set near the Cambodian border in 1967, the film traces the moral and spiritual journey of a young recruit, Private Chris Taylor, who is a member of a platoon engaged in "search-and-destroy" missions. The men themselves appear to be split into two warring camps. On one side are the supporters and followers of Sergeant Barnes, a tough bruiser given to hard drinking and to complaints about the restrictive rules of engagement that the wimpish politicians have imposed on him. On the other side are the adherents of the humane and civilized Sergeant Elias. Barnes and his men drink bourbon; Elias and his friends smoke dope. Barnes refers to the Vietnamese as "gooks"; Elias would not let a racist remark fall from his lips.

But the real issue is not one of personalities. Barnes, according to Elias, "still believes in the war" (whatever that may mean), whereas he, Elias, has become disillusioned with the whole enterprise beyond the point of endurance. The American side is hopelessly outclassed by the North Vietnamese on the battlefield, while off the battlefield fragging (the killing of officers by their own men using fragmentation hand grenades) and drug abuse seem to be the order of the day. In the light of all this it is no wonder that we find the idealistic Taylor, who dropped out of college to join up since he did not think it fair that "only the poor kids and not the rich kids should serve in Vietnam," befriending Elias.

The clash between the two sergeants reaches its bloody denouement following an interrogation of villagers that goes wrong. The village appears to be in the hands of the Vietcong, or at least provides them with food, sanctuary, and men. Barnes, a veteran of many campaigns, is obviously near the breaking point: he shoots an old woman in cold blood, and threatens to kill a little girl. A hapless young lieutenant who has become totally dependent on Barnes and has more or less ceded command to him, stands around aimlessly, neither approving nor disapproving. It is left to Elias to salvage the situation. He rescues the girl and a fight between the two sergeants ensues. Elias informs everyone that he will file a report detailing Barnes's atrocities, with an obvious view to having him court-martialed. Within a day or so of this announcement Barnes murders Elias during a botched operation (most American operations in this film are botched).

These events serve as a kind of revelation to young Taylor, who has gradually become convinced of the immorality of the whole American undertaking in Vietnam. The mantle having fallen upon him, he urges Elias's followers to avenge the master's death by fragging Barnes. When they refuse—arguing, not unreasonably, that since the man has been wounded seven times, it is unlikely they will succeed where the mighty North Vietnamese have failed—he decides to do the job himself. This he accomplishes in almost the very last scene of the film, after the platoon's position has been overrun by the Communists and the men have to be bailed out by B-52s.

STONE's falsifications in this movie begin with his choice of 1967 as the year for showing the futility of the American involvement in Vietnam. The effect is to imply, wrongly, that the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was a direct response to defeat on the battlefield. Similarly, in portraying fragging and the use of drugs as daily occurrences among men constantly involved in combat, Stone brings forward by some four years the outbreak of these delinquencies, symptoms in

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fact of an army *lacking* opportunities for combat (because more and more of the fighting was by then being done by the South Vietnamese). The invincibility of the Communists on the one hand, and American vulnerability on the other hand, are thus ludicrously exaggerated. One need hardly make the obvious point that the massive North Vietnamese invasion of 1975 would not have been undertaken had there still been American units in the South which could not be overrun. Indeed, the fact of the North's having to launch so enormous an invasion was testimony to the failure of its fifteen-year effort to topple the government of South Vietnam by means of guerrilla warfare.

The Westmoreland strategy that was pursued up until 1968 of aggressively seeking out the Communist guerrillas in their strongholds in the hills or in the jungles, of wresting control of villages and hamlets, and of evacuating populations from Communist-controlled areas, did (whatever its other shortcomings) bring about the virtual decimation of Communist forces, losses which the North Vietnamese were able to sustain only because they were driven by a ruthless totalitarian dictatorship. (From January 1965 to December 1967 their losses were on the order of 250,000; in 1968 alone the casualty rate was said to be around 291,000.) Throughout this time the morale of the American soldiers was, not unexpectedly, rather high. It was only from about 1970 on, when U.S. servicemen were being mainly deployed as support troops and were consequently spending most of their time in rear areas, that officers began to experience serious difficulties in motivating them to get into any combat at all. And as the date of the eventual American departure began to loom ever closer, the soldiers inevitably preoccupied themselves with the goal of not being the last American killed in Vietnam.

But this was still a long way off. By compressing the story of ten years into two or three skirmishes stretched out over a few days, *Platoon* creates the false impression that it was the Americans rather than the Communists who were suffering the really severe casualties. It also misleadingly suggests that the demoralization of the GIs was caused by a succession of defeats and the prospect of gradual annihilation.

Of course, it is not as history that Stone would presumably wish his film to be judged. In the conflict between Elias and Barnes, many critics discerned an enactment of the struggle between good and evil that takes place within every human soul. And to add a dash of profundity, in this struggle neither good nor evil finally triumphs—or at least so the ending of the film would suggest. Up to that point, everything that transpires urges us to take the side of Elias against Barnes: Elias hates the war, Barnes loves it; Elias is a nice fellow, Barnes is a monster; Taylor loves Elias, he hates Barnes. Then in the last scene we hear Taylor, in a voice-over, recalling the past from a present vantage point: "I think now on looking back we did not fight the enemy in Vietnam. We fought ourselves. The enemy was in ourselves. I am a child born of those two fathers who are still fighting for my soul."

This odd ending is distinctly similar to what Stone did in his earlier film, *Salvador*. There, his hero—a left-wing photojournalist—belabors us for two hours with every cliché under the sun about the perfidies of American foreign policy, and then suddenly, turning on the hitherto exemplary and admirable Marxist guerrillas, starts yelling: "You're becoming just like them! You're becoming just like them!" The effect, depending on how one wants to interpret it, is balance, or ambiguity, or just confusion. So in *Platoon* perhaps Stone intends us finally to credit Barnes with greater moral stature than he himself has bothered to do up until then, or at least to think of Barnes, too, as another victim of the war. Or perhaps not.

In any event, it is notable that aside from the interrogation scene, obviously intended to make us think of My Lai, the only explicit political statement in this film is of the resentful, socially embittered kind which could quite easily have come from *Rambo*. Early on, Taylor reflects: "The guys in this platoon are the guys nobody cares about. They are the poor and unwanted, yet they fight for freedom. They're at the bottom of the barrel and they don't know it." This is rather similar in tone to Rambo's rueful comment: "I'm a guy who's expendable. Someone you invite to a party who doesn't show up and it doesn't matter." Such sentiments implicitly repudiate any large view of the war as an expression of American political purpose. But the operative word here is "implicitly": there is nothing in *Platoon* like the tirades against American foreign policy that characterize *Salvador*. This, no doubt, is another reason why critics could call *Platoon* "apolitical"—because it does not *explicitly* espouse the notion that the ultimate source of evil lay in the American decision to take up arms.

WHERE *Platoon* portrays men split between good (meaning antiwar) and evil impulses, the soldiers in John Irvin's *Hamburger Hill* are one and all good men, who fight and die bravely although they neither know nor care what it is they are fighting and dying for. Yet precisely because they are young, likable, and decent, the vivid scenes of their mutilation are unavoidably charged with a bitterness more intense than anything in *Platoon*. Moreover, where in *Platoon* "meaninglessness" is a quality exclusively characteristic of the American war effort in Vietnam itself, in *Hamburger Hill* it is made to embrace the life of the people back home, including the media and the "peace movement." Just as the soldiers in the film react to the horrors around them by repeatedly intoning "It don't mean nothing. It don't mean a thing," so when one of them goes home for a visit and finds his wife living with a peacenik, or is harassed by college kids, or is pelted with excrement by pretty young girls, all he

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can say in explanation is "It don't mean nothing."

John Irvin spent some time in Vietnam in 1969 making a film for the BBC and he formed a somewhat sentimental attachment to the young soldiers who fought there. It is admirable that he should now make a film honoring the American dead and rescuing them from calumny, but it is also difficult to applaud an enterprise that seems to find no other source of meaning in that long, protracted conflict than the courage in adversity displayed by American infantrymen in one massive military operation. In the film the men are depicted as being ground down by the Communists up on the hill as well as by their own men from helicopter gunships and, in the metaphoric sense, by the letters from home which inform them of the hatred and contempt that await them should they survive and return. All this is moving enough —but by resolutely refusing to entertain the possibility of meaning, Irvin fails to accord his characters the honor he rightly believes they deserve.

Irvin's movie concentrates entirely on the successful if costly assault in May 1969 on Dong Ap Bia (military designation Hill 937), better known as "Hamburger Hill"—an operation that drew widespread criticism at the time from, among others, President Nixon. In so doing, Irvin, like Stone before him, consciously leaves the impression that one episode or series of episodes epitomizes the overall American effort in Southeast Asia: the abiding image from the film is the sight of American bodies, both live and dead, repeatedly rolling down the hill, as if the entire attempt to wage war in Vietnam were in some fundamental sense a defiance of the laws of gravity. But the reason the real "Hamburger Hill" operation became a minor *cause célèbre* at the time was due to an altogether different set of circumstances.

Once the conclusion had been reached in Washington that the Vietnam war was "unwinnable," it made little sense to go all out for a frontal assault on a hill just because the enemy happened to be there. Such things belonged to a bygone era that had come to an end with the recall of General Westmoreland on June 30, 1968. President Nixon's orders to the new commander in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, were that "the primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam." In lieu of military victory, "pacification" began to be pursued with great zest, and in practice, this also meant leaving villages in the hands of the Communists and not risking casualties in trying to "liberate" them.

This, and only this, is what made "meaningless" the decision of Major General Melvin Zais to seize control of Hamburger Hill. Had his action been undertaken two years earlier, it would have been no more "meaningless" than any other costly operation in any other war.

Still, John Irvin's attempt to cram into a few days as much of the "Vietnam experience" as possible is more successful than other such efforts. *Platoon* follows Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in focusing on the deterioration of American morale as a consequence of a daily succession of nightmares within Vietnam itself. *Hamburger Hill*, by contrast, is the first film to show that the soldiers' self-doubts and general sense of bewilderment are a response not only to their battlefield experience but also the expression of a debilitation triggered by the activities of American *non*combatants. In addition to what is happening to them in Vietnam itself it is the barrage of antiwar statements by prominent public officials back home, the "peace" demonstrations, the news of leftist Americans lending themselves to North Vietnamese propaganda, the loss of girlfriends to antiwar civilians, which make them feel that this is not the war they should be fighting.

PRECISELY these same features of *Hamburger Hill* are no doubt what also account for the mixed critical reception it provoked, although it is technically and visually a superior film to *Platoon*. Indeed one suspects that were it not for the (universally acknowledged) power and vividness of this movie, John Irvin's allusions to antiwar actions so embarrassing to recall would have got a much rougher ride still—something similar, in all likelihood, to the vituperations that greeted Lionel Chetwynd's *The Hanoi Hilton*.

This film is set in the infamous Hoa Lo prisoner-of-war camp in Hanoi and, like *Hamburger Hill*, it distinguishes itself from other treatments of the war in showing Americans able to endure daily hardships without ceasing to be the same basically decent people they started out as. It is not with this point that the critics quarreled, however. *The Hanoi Hilton* goes even further than *Hamburger Hill* in its harsh portrayal of the "ingratitude" of the people back home. Where John Irvin directs his hostility against generals and antiwar activists in about equal proportions, *The Hanoi Hilton* punctuates scenes of American pilots being tortured by their North Vietnamese captors with scenes of their being harangued by visiting Americans who assure them that they are being well treated.

This was altogether too much for most critics. Stanley Kauffmann in the *New Republic* opened his review: "*The Hanoi Hilton* is filth. It exploits the sufferings . . . of American POWs . . . in order to promote a distortion of history: that the peace movement in the United States . . . prolonged the imprisonment of those men by impeding American victory." Yet all that Lionel Chetwynd appears to suggest is that the "peace movement in the United States" played an important role in the political and psychological war that Hanoi was waging. Obviously, among the groups opposed to the war there were greater and lesser degrees of genuine concern for the casualties, of gullibility about the aims of the Communists, of downright connivance in the propaganda offensive of North

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Vietnam. But the plain truth is that sympathy for the plight of the servicemen held in captivity was hardly high on the list of priorities.

That Kauffmann's view was echoed by virtually every other critic suggests that Chetwynd's arrow hit home. Audiences, however, were not moved by this film, and it was withdrawn within a matter of weeks. This was not really all that surprising: even if it had been technically more proficient and better acted, watching it would have remained a deeply depressing, not to say harrowing, experience.

It is a pity that in treating so important a subject Chetwynd did not make a better movie. Rather than focusing on individual characters he allows his attention to wander so as to take in just about everyone in the prison. He fails to introduce any real drama, instead working woodenly with a chronological structure encompassing the ten years or so of the men's incarceration, within which he dutifully records all the important events in the outside world along with the details of every single torture that they endure. There is only so much a moviegoer can take, and sitting through over two hours of repeated doses of pain clearly exceeds the quota.

YET once again it was not these aesthetic deficiencies that riled the critics. A number of them, including Kauffmann, seemed to take at face value the claim of the prison commandant that since the U.S. had not officially declared war on the North Vietnamese, the Geneva Convention relating to the treatment of POWs did not apply to any Americans captured, who were simply being dealt with as "war criminals." Such arguments were made in the past and have been refuted in the past; it is rather dispiriting to find them being taken seriously today. (Article 85 of the Geneva Convention provides that "prisoners of war prosecuted under the laws of the Detaining Power for acts committed prior to capture shall retain, even if convicted, the benefits of the present Convention." The North Vietnamese, who ratified the Convention in 1957, entered a reservation to this article, to the effect that "prisoners of war prosecuted and convicted for war crimes or for crimes against humanity . . . shall not benefit from the present Convention." But the key words are *prosecuted* and *convicted*. The North Vietnamese made no attempt to try the pilots on charges of war crimes, and confessions extracted under torture are obviously not the same thing as prosecution and conviction. Thus the North Vietnamese were in violation not only of the Geneva Convention but also of their own reservation.)

Every one of the tortures recorded in *The Hanoi Hilton* has been attested to by the POWs who returned: maggots in the food, electric shock treatment, the withholding of rights to the exchange of mail, repeated beatings, sadistically inadequate medical care, years of solitary confinement, hanging by the wrists from the ceiling, public parades of prisoners through lines of rock-throwing fanatics. Yet when these stories first began to emerge they were met with disbelief and contemptuous dismissal, for persons of stature and celebrity had been to Hanoi, and had come back to say that no torture was taking place there.

In reminding us of this shameful episode *The Hanoi Hilton* makes an important contribution to recreating the Vietnam war "as it really was." In this movie we get some idea of the importance of propaganda in Communist strategy, and of the immensely significant contribution that Western "well-wishers" made to the war effort. Major Ngo Doc explains: "What we will not win on the battlefield your journalists will win for us on your doorstep. We will win the war in Berkeley, California and on the Washington Mall." The lines sound tendentious, but he is merely articulating a strategy Ho Chi Minh had worked out as long ago as the 1920's in China, one which had proved so efficacious in his struggle against the French.

Aside from *The Hanoi Hilton*, the recent films on the Vietnam war hardly treat the other side's view at all. In *Hamburger Hill* the activities of the "peace movement" are seen entirely from the bitter and bemused perspective of the soldiers daily being asked to sacrifice their lives on behalf of an apparently ungrateful nation. As for *Platoon*, its political understanding of why and against whom the war was being fought begins and ends with young Taylor's *mot*: "We did not fight the enemy in Vietnam. We fought ourselves." This appears all the more evasive when one recalls that two earlier Vietnam films, *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*, did make some attempt to go beyond the internal American conflict and to understand the real enemy that had to be faced.

Thus, in *The Deer Hunter*, the sadistic games of Russian roulette which the captured Americans are forced to play, whether or not they have any basis in fact, at least convey some idea of what sort of regime the Communists had in mind for the people of the South. This was much more powerfully developed in *Apocalypse Now*. It is the Communists, says the crazed American Colonel Kurtz, who understand that otherwise kindly people can be made to perform the most barbaric acts, "without feeling, without passion, without judgment," and it is because of this understanding that their ultimate triumph can be foretold. *Apocalypse Now* does, in its obsessive focus on the military dimension, lose sight of the political aspect of the North's struggle against the South and against the United States, but at least, like *The Hanoi Hilton*, it treats this conflict in terms that go beyond the usual round of American soldiers and their assorted problems.

MOST film-makers prefer instead to stay within their normal cozy preoccupations. Thus, in his *Full Metal Jacket* there is little of Vietnam but a very great deal of the Stanley Kubrick of *Clockwork Orange* (1973) and *The Shining* (1980).

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Madness, violence, quirks in the American national character have long been the themes Kubrick has felt most comfortable with. Show him a war and he feels obliged to meditate on the awful psychopathology of man killing man. This is precisely what he does in *Full Metal Jacket*, his first movie in eight years. In most respects the film is quite similar to both *Platoon* and *Hamburger Hill*, but with two exceptions. First, it presents the American side as irredeemably bad (though, to be fair, without actually endorsing the side of the enemy). Second, its theme is not the usual one of the malign influence of the war on the American character, but rather the opposite, the malign influence of the American character on the war. The story concerns the turning of young men into trained killers. The first forty-five minutes take place in a U.S. Marine Corps boot camp in North Carolina, in the company of a sadistic drill sergeant and a group of youngsters with closely shaved heads but no real names, no friends, no interests. As the men are steadily stripped of all human attachments, one of their number, Private Pyle, goes steadily insane; upon finally being accepted into the Marines, he kills first his drill instructor and then himself, although why he alone should have failed to understand that killing is something a Marine does to "gooks" and not to his fellow Americans is never explained. Kubrick simply drops the subject and transports us next to South Vietnam, a land apparently singled out by history to become an out-patient clinic for the madmen America unleashes upon the world.

The weakness of Kubrick's structure is now suddenly made clear. In order to show young men being turned into murderous automatons he has had to eschew any attempt at individualization (with the exception of the weirdo Pyle); now, however, he has to rustle up some characters around whom to spin a story. One of these, Private Joker, who is employed as a journalist for the army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, functions as "the innocent eye" in the film, expressing the audience's horror at what Americans in Vietnam are like. To expose what they are like, Kubrick parades before us a succession of types, each one creepier than the last. There is the Blimpish editor of *Stars and Stripes* who insists that his staff employ the euphemism "evacuees" instead of "refugees," and "sweep and clear" instead of "search and destroy." There is the dim-witted colonel who declares: "I've never asked anything more from my men than to obey my orders as if they were the words of God. We're here to help the gooks because inside every gook there is an American trying to get out." There is the helicopter machine-gunner who enjoys using up tens of thousands of dollars' worth of ammunition just for the joy of it: "Anyone who runs is a VC. Anyone who stands still is a disciplined VC. Ain't war fun?" There is the GI who reflects wistfully: "When we get back to the real world we're going to miss not having anyone around worth shooting." Somehow, one gets the message.

The film's denouement takes place in a burned-out building after the near-annihilation of the unit by a lone girl sniper. Finally the girl has been located; she is wounded, and it is left to Joker to put her out of her misery. She turns out to be the first person Joker has killed. Any hope we may have entertained that he, as least, will be more humane than the others is dashed as he joins enthusiastically in the Mickey Mouse song and we hear in a simultaneous voice-over: "I'm in a world of shit . . . yes. But I am alive. And I am not afraid."

Kubrick's film is better made and more gripping than any of the other releases, though infantile in the labored discovery that war involves killing, and hopelessly self-contradictory in its portrayal of a group of blindly obedient killers suddenly and inexplicably transformed into an ill-disciplined, incompetent, dim-witted lot. Kubrick's may also be the only film about Vietnam to portray Americans as evil *before* they arrive there, and for this it surely deserves an award of some kind for moral consistency.

In *Platoon* some of the men are corrupted by the war but have the chance to redeem themselves, and incidentally their country, by turning against it. In *The Hanoi Hilton* and in *Hamburger Hill* the men remain uncorrupted; it is rather the people back home who in various ways fail them. But there is no chance of any redemption in *Full Metal Jacket*, since not only are the men incorrigible killers but once in Vietnam they bring evil and corruption with them, laying waste entire cities if not with firepower then with thievery and prostitution. What Kubrick's film has in common with the others are his ascription of these qualities not to politics but to nature (American nature, that is) and the conception of the entire "Vietnam experience" as one prolonged leap into the meaningless and the absurd.

It may be that for the time being, the only justice we can expect from Hollywood on the subject of this complex and terrible conflict, perhaps the most purely ideological war ever fought, will be the sort dispensed by films like *The Hanoi Hilton* and *Hamburger Hill*, which do not aspire to do anything more than acknowledge the sacrifices made by young Americans in Southeast Asia. This at least is something to put against the wonted, bogus celebration of the "heroism" displayed at campus protests, riots in Chicago, "peace" rallies, and marches on Washington. But one cannot help wishing that someone, somewhere would make a movie that would attend to the ideas and interests that originally inspired the deeds of those young Americans, not to mention the ideas and interests of the real enemy who had to be faced in Southeast Asia, and who shows no sign of disappearing.

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My Hungary and Theirs

Paul Hollander

HUNGARY under the long reign of János Kádár has often been seen in the West as a wave of the future, a model of evolutionary transformation within the Soviet bloc and its only success story. My recent visit provided me with a new understanding of both changing conditions and the limits of change in this small but resourceful nation.

I left my native Hungary without authorization in 1956 and did not go back for eighteen years—on the somewhat irrational grounds that, once there, I might not be permitted to leave, and the U.S. government was not likely to send in the Marines to get me out. In 1974 I finally overcame this reluctance, and have gone back regularly every few years since then.

These visits are not journeys of emotional homecoming since both my parents are no longer living, and I have never cherished illusions about Hungary as my lost homeland. Nor are they motivated, so far as I can tell, by any sort of sociological fact-finding zeal, since I am not a professional student of Hungarian society, politics, or culture and have never before written on the subject. If anything, they are rather like random archeological excavations without a grand plan or expectation of great discovery, which may yet turn up something.

I do not nourish a love-hate relationship toward Hungary and its people. For their part the "natives" are very friendly (I come after all in the dual capacity of former countryman and representative of "the West"). Thus I find myself surprisingly detached, feeling neither hostility nor any great warmth. When in Hungary, I am not quite a native but not simply a tourist, either. I still have a few friends and relatives living there, I still speak the language fluently and without an accent (though with a somewhat diminished vocabulary), I still know my way around Budapest. Yet for all that, I am an outsider with inside knowledge, and I rather enjoy this role. Among other things, it means I can leave whenever I want to, which has not always been the case.

My earlier life in Hungary is fairly well summed up by a few episodes recorded indelibly in my memory. In 1944, when I was twelve, my family and I came close to being killed by an anti-Semitic mob led by Hungarian storm troopers of the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross party; seven years later, during the postwar Communist regime of Mátyás Rákosi, we were exiled as "politically unreliable elements" and transported under armed guard in the middle of the night to a village in Eastern Hungary. This, as it occurred after my graduation from high school, took care of any prospect of attending university.

I spent two years in this village, after which I was drafted into one of the quasi-military units known as "construction battalions." These were special units set up in lieu of military service for young men of draft age whose political classification barred them from regular military service. Our days were devoted to heavy manual labor combined with military drills and compulsory political seminars. The food and living conditions would have caused riots in any American prison. I spent two years in this type of military service.

SINCE my grandfather's socioeconomic background was the cause of the exile and our attendant classification as politically unreliable, a few episodes from his life too are in order here, if only because they also convey so succinctly what it meant to be a prosperous Jewish businessman in that part of Europe in the first half of the 20th century.

In 1919, during the Communist revolution led by Béla Kun, my grandfather was jailed and beaten up for being a capitalist by representatives of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. A year later, having fled to Vienna and then returned, he was once again arrested and beaten—this time for being a Jew, by soldiers of the "white" counterrevolutionary army. Two decades of relative peace ensued, and then in March 1944, following the entry of German troops into Hungary, he was arrested by the Gestapo but miraculously released a few months later, only to suffer a skull fracture during the Arrow Cross pogrom I have already mentioned. In January 1945, following the Soviet entry into Hungary, he was chased through the streets of Budapest at gunpoint by a group of Soviet soldiers as he was running away with my mother and sister (in whom they took a decidedly prurient interest). I recall his hurried efforts in the air-raid shelter to shave off his mustache without water, in order to make it more difficult for the pursuing soldiers to recognize him (my mother and sister we concealed with pillows and comforters). In 1948 my grandfather was tried and imprisoned (for a year or so) by the Hungarian Communist authorities for "sabotaging the five-year plan" (he then still nominally owned a business); in 1951 he was exiled, with

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the rest of us, for his past socio-economic sins. He died in exile.

That I can still go back to Hungary despite such memories (and even enjoy it) is somewhat puzzling to me, and I have given some thought to the question. I have no strong feelings about the prevailing political system, or about the people or the social conditions. I am evidently more tolerant than Sylvester Stallone, who after a visit to Hungary observed that "if everybody had to spend two weeks in a Communist country, 'patriotism in America would reach epidemic proportions.'" Also, for reasons not entirely clear to me, I am less irritated by Communist party officials in Hungary (with some of whom I am personally acquainted) than I am by those of my American academic colleagues who believe that the Marxist-Leninist authorities in Nicaragua deserve the sympathy of every decent human being.

Perhaps the key to my equanimity lies in the opposite of survivor guilt —what might be called survivor smugness. Having escaped the Nazis and gotten away from the Communists, and having managed in addition to make a new life for myself in the West, I feel lucky and privileged enough to be able to revisit even those scenes of my childhood that carry less than happy associations. On one of my first trips back, I searched out the "Yellow Star House"—where my family and I were given shelter for a time before we went into hiding in 1944—and also paid a brief visit to the village in Eastern Hungary where we spent our exile. I even tried to visit the grounds of the Hungarian Nuclear Research Institute, which I had helped build during my years in the construction battalion (it remains closed to the general public).

Such biographical reflections and links aside, there is no question but that present-day Hungary is an interesting country, a place where, as the cliché has it, East and West meet. (Or, according to a taxi driver, a country which adopts the worst features of both the East and the West; he had in mind state socialism, a gift from the East, and the new taxes, a Western import.) It is a country that readily inspires reflections about the connections between personal lives and social-political arrangements, about the present and future of bureaucratic state socialism, about socialism and modernity.

It is surprising to discover, for example, that Hungary boasts a full quota of the social pathologies we tend to associate with the advanced industrial societies of the West: extremely high suicide and very low birth rates, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, soaring divorce rates, and serious environmental problems, including especially air and water pollution. Socialism, then, for all its varied attempts at benevolent social engineering, has not provided a shield against the ravages of modernization—that much at least is clear from the case of Hungary.

Other conclusions are not so easy to come by, since Hungary seems to lend itself to both sides of every question, including the question of whether genuine social change can ever take place within the confines of the Soviet empire.

Those who believe in the possibility of such change can cite examples of liberalization. In Hungary, dissidents are not jailed or kept in psychiatric hospitals, only deprived of regular employment and sometimes of decent housing; they may travel abroad; they may also publish their *samizdat* magazines and pamphlets, with occasional interruption by the authorities who sometimes take away their equipment and close their shops.

A friend said to me last summer, "These days you can, even in public, talk or write about almost anything—but it will not make any difference." A striking example of this was provided by a teenage tour guide who was taking a group of some twenty (Hungarian) visitors through an old monastery. Describing the history of the building he noted that during World War II several hundred Jews were hidden in it, and for that reason the Germans had arrested the Abbot. The same Abbot, he added with a straight face, "was again arrested after the war, this time by the Communists, and tortured to death." On another guided tour, of caves outside Budapest, our guide used the opportunity to thunder about the incompetence of the planning authorities who had ruined parts of the natural setting in their zeal to create a tourist attraction.

These and other examples of outspokenness do not mean that people have a greater sense of control over their lives; the complaints as a rule reflect despair and helplessness. The economic hardships, mismanagement, and corruption are here to stay, in one way or another. A friend (just given permission to attend some conference in Western Europe) said wistfully: "Yes, they let us go, but we have to beg for it. I would give a lot for a passport like yours." Although travel restrictions have substantially diminished, travel to the West has yet to become a self-evident right as opposed to something grudgingly doled out. Moreover, some old restraints survive. A cab-driver told me that he could not get a passport allowing him to go to a capitalist country for ten years, because he had served in the missile forces of the army: "They figure that it takes ten years for the technology to become obsolete, so by then I cannot reveal any secrets."

In any event, the concessions are subject to the whims of authority and can be withdrawn at will. So long as Hungary's basic political structure remains unchanged, and so long as the party still holds a monopoly of power, nothing will take place in Hungary or any other Soviet-dominated society comparable to the recent transformation of formerly authoritarian countries like Spain, Portugal, or Argentina.

The case of Hungary can also be used to argue that even in the Soviet bloc, the past has a way of reasserting itself, however gradually, so that a country with close historical and cultural ties to the West will eventually shed the Soviet political straitjacket. The voracity with which educated Hungarians consume Western culture (not only in its blue-jeans/rock-music aspect) would seem to bear out

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some part, if not all, of this optimistic thesis. So too would the curious revival of social customs, attitudes, and modes of address, along with a more relaxed officiousness and nepotism, associated with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Also reminiscent of the monarchy and of the so-called historic compromise which Hungarian nationalism made with it in the latter part of the 19th century is the idea of achieving a similar or corresponding compromise with the Soviet Union.

Nationalism in Hungary is not quite so strong as it is in Poland, where it gains support from a uniformly Catholic population (only two-thirds of Hungarians are Catholics). Nonethless it is still a vital cultural force which has helped to cushion the political regimentation imported from the East. Hungarians believe their culture to be far superior to that of most of their neighbors—and especially to that of the Soviet Union—and this belief contributes to the sense of national solidarity and community. These are further enhanced by the country's small size (the population is just over ten million) and by its unique language, totally unrelated to that of its neighbors or for that matter to any other country in Europe.

How the Jewish minority still living in Hungary (estimated at fewer than 100,000) fits into this community is a controversial question. The regime is officially quite tolerant of Jewish cultural and religious existence—more so than any other in the Soviet bloc. On an earlier visit I saw an exhibit in a major museum devoted to Jewish life and culture in Hungary. But I also recall one of the guards making a disparaging remark about the exhibit.

Opinions differ widely on the extent and tenacity of anti-Semitism within the general population. Individual Jews to whom I talked seemed rather wary of the whole subject and less than eager to assert their Jewish identity in public or even to make it known to fellow workers. Given the history of Jewish life in Hungary, their attitude should hardly be surprising.

If Hungary's Jews seem reticent these days (at least on questions of their identity), the same cannot be said of other sectors of the population. It is the apparent lack of intimidation among Hungarians in most walks of life that is, in my eyes, the most notable development of the last two decades. Politically relevant grumbling and criticism are endemic; I must have spoken, for instance, to at least twenty taxi drivers—you can sit next to them, no bulletproof or other dividers here—all of whom complained with relish and abandon of the declining living standards, rising prices, inflation, corruption, shortages, mismanagement. (Once when a black Mercedes drove by one of them remarked: "I would put away the driver of any of these cars; you can't have a car like that without being a crook of one kind or another.") The taxi drivers generally work ten to twelve hours a day, six or seven days a week. One was a degree-holding engineer who spent the hours of eight to five in his office, and after five drove a taxi. Why? To make ends meet and, in his case, to save for a down payment on an apartment. As many told me, the Hungarian authorities are enthusiastic proponents of "privatization"; the government is getting out of the housing business, and if people wish to get better housing they must pay for it.

In the past, complaints were considerably more muted—not just because informers might be listening, but also because Hungarians felt a genuine gratitude to the authorities at being, if not well off, then at least better off than their neighbors in other Eastern-bloc countries. This brand of limited contentment is no longer in evidence. Today people seem far more beset by economic anxieties, though these very anxieties may reflect higher expectations as much as they do more objective realties. The country's present economic difficulties, well reported in the American press, are due to huge indebtedness, low productivity (at any rate in the public sector), overstaffing, and rising prices which are barely followed by rising incomes. In an attempt to make the economy more productive and profitable, the authorities are instituting new measures: superfluous workers will be let go, new taxes are on the horizon, and government subsidies to housing and other services are being cut back. As a result, people seem, if anything, more gloomy and dissatisfied than they were in the old days. They are no longer as grateful as they once were, for instance, at being allowed to own some little Czech, East German, Rumanian, or Soviet-made car. "Why should a car be a privilege?" one cabdriver asked. And, to obtain this privilege, why should a family deprive itself of other goods and services for years?

In addition to economic worries, there is a new sense of class inequality in Hungary deriving from the limited free-enterprise policies implemented a decade ago. Ordinary Hungarians have always resented the privileged life of the Communist party aristocracy, but now their resentment has been enlarged to take in the new breed of high-living private entrepreneurs who have appeared on the scene in the wake of those policies. Natives of Budapest refer to these successful free-enterprisers as "the upper ten-thousand," and describe—with a mixture of reverence and resentment—the luxurious villas they are having built for themselves, complete with indoor swimming pools and the requisite Mercedes.

To be sure, the private sector also includes doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, owners of small hotels and restaurants, as well as small craftsmen like shoemakers, tailors, plumbers, and electricians. But even these entrepreneurs can earn incomes 10, 20, or even 30 times higher than those of the average citizen, whose pay ranges between $100-$150 per month. Prices in Hungary are very low, of course, when translated into dollars—a good meal may be had for two or three dollars; a taxi ride for under a dollar—but even so the average income does not go very far.

By reviving private enterprise Hungary has become not only a more productive *and* inegalitarian society, but also one that has done away with the cardinal tenet of all existing socialist systems: the

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monopoly of public (state) ownership over the means of production. Thus, to the extent that Hungary has become a more livable, more open society it has also become less of a socialist one. Whether or not this evolution will continue it is hard to say, for Hungary's destiny does not hinge on its own decisions.

EVEN in the Gorbachev era, Soviet power cannot be forgotten, nor can the Soviet presence be ignored as the ultimate factor in Hungary's destiny. (I might also note that nobody I talked to mentioned Gorbachev and his reforms. When I brought up the topic the response was one of skepticism about any sweeping changes in the basic character of the system, both its Soviet and Hungarian version.) Thus, on three separate drives to the countryside, each in a different direction, I saw numerous Soviet military installations and troops, fuel depots, tank proving grounds, truck parks; there were even Soviet soldiers touring local museums.

Such sights are a forceful reminder of the limits of Westernization, and of what are sometimes politely called "certain geopolitical realities." While it is hard to predict the limits of institutional change, especially under the current fluid conditions—much depends both on the degree of change within the Soviet Union itself and on the problems of succession following the approaching retirement of János Kádár—"Westernization" of several kinds has already made deep inroads into the minds of Hungarians. Educated Hungarians understand, deeply appreciate, and long for the blessings of political democracy, free public expression, institutional restraint on power, and other aspects of political pluralism which educated Westerners tend to take for granted or dismiss as unimportant.

EN ROUTE to the airport on my way back, I was asked by my youthful taxi driver if I would sell him a one-dollar bill. "What for?" I asked. "For good luck," he said. It was an unlikely talisman for a member of the Hungarian working classes to cherish as protection against adversity under socialism.

Righting Wrongs

David Stove

IN his autobiography Bertrand Russell mentions many brilliant people he had known at Cambridge early in the century. But one of these, John Maynard Keynes, left on him a unique impression of intellectual force. "Keynes's intellect was the clearest and sharpest I have ever known. When I argued with him, I felt that I took my life in my hands, and I seldom emerged without feeling something of a fool."

This is impressive testimony indeed. It is confirmed by something that Keynes said about Russell in "My Early Beliefs," an essay on the Cambridge-Bloomsbury circle to which they had both belonged in the early 1900's. (This essay is one of those in his *Essays and Sketches in Biography*, 1951.) Looking back after thirty-odd years, Keynes is contemptuous of the superficiality of that circle's political and psychological ideas. But Russell's political ideas, he implies, were outstanding for silliness even in that company. "Bertie in particular sustained simultaneously a pair of opinions ludicrously incompatible. He held that in fact human affairs were carried on after a most irrational fashion, but that the remedy was quite simple and easy, since all we had to do was to carry them on rationally."

Just two effortless sentences, and yet how fatal they are to any belief in Russell's political wisdom, or even sense! They are like a bayonet thrust through the heart and out the back. Russell was not only a fool in Helsinki in 1967, "trying" America for its "war crimes" in Vietnam: he was a fool even in 1903.

Professional logicians might question—I know, alas, some who certainly would question—whether the two opinions which Keynes ascribes to Russell are incompatible, strictly speaking. Well, that sort of thing is the logicians' livelihood, and it would be unkind to try to deprive them of it. Let us call the conjunction of Russell's two opinions absurd rather than incompatible, if this will buy for us the silence of those Russellian progeny, the contemporary logicians. And absurd, at least, that conjunction certainly is.

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But the absurdity is one that is very far from being peculiar to Russell. It has afflicted countless other people as well, and its favorite victims are people who are, as Russell was, intelligent, educated, and "concerned." It is, in fact, the characteristic absurdity of the utopianism which came in with the 18th-century Enlightenment.

The past, according to this utopianism, is unspeakably dark, the future unspeakably bright. Yet how can this be? Unless the change is simply a miracle, there must be some natural cause or causes which bring it about. If the past is so uniformly dark, how can it have brought us to "the shores of light"? It is no good gesturing at this or that particular person or event: Newton, or Luther, or Columbus, or the invention of printing. The more one knows about any such apparent singularities, the more they merge insensibly into their historical background. Utopianism, in order to justify its own destructiveness, has to paint the past as so bad, and the future as so good, as to make it an insoluble mystery how the one can give birth to the other.

Condorcet and Godwin—to take the two most typical utopians of the Enlightenment—are utterly helpless in the face of this simple but fundamental objection. They are as exposed as Russell was to Keynes's devastating reproach. They simply had no explanation, where they needed one most: of how darkness gives rise to light. Any explanation would have been better than none. For example, they could have said that God, at a certain point in time, simply changes men's hearts for the better. This would not have been a good explanation, of course, and is indeed the very kind of thing which the Enlightenment claimed to have outgrown. But it would have been better than nothing.

In this respect, the utopians of the next generation, such as Saint-Simon and Comte, represent very little advance. Marx, however, to his credit, did offer an explanation, and an explanation in naturalistic terms, of the transition from darkness to light. It is a result, he said, of *economic* causes, which are working themselves out quite independently of anyone's wishes or beliefs; and economic causes will install the classless society with the same inevitability as they once installed feudal, and then bourgeois, society.

It need hardly be said that Marx's theory will not survive five minutes' scrutiny. His distinction between the economic "base" and the ideological "superstructure" just will not stand up, and his idea of "relations to the means of production" is embarrassingly vague. But Marx did have the great merit of perceiving that his utopian predecessors and rivals had *no mechanism at all* to suggest. They just thought, like Russell, that it would be much nicer if everything were much nicer, and that there is nothing, after all, to stop us making everything much nicer, since all that is needed is for us all to be much nicer: more reasonable, kinder, etc. This is, of course, the logic of dreams and of childish religion. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, Christian, after being long imprisoned in Doubting Castle by the Giant Despair, wakes up one morning and suddenly realizes that he has had the key to his prison in his pocket all along.

THE preceding remarks have contemporary as well as historical application. For Enlightenment utopianism is by now the unofficial religion of all, or nearly all, the rulers of the free world.

Everyone knows who the real rulers of the free world were twenty years ago: those students and professors in American universities who fought for withdrawal from Vietnam. Superficial observers imagine that things are very different now: that those rulers have been turned out and reduced to comparative impotence. It is not so. The Vietnam catastrophe was due not to any defeat or disaffection of America's armed forces, but to an enormous revolution in feeling at home: a revolution comparable in scale with the one which divided the Jazz Age from the pre-1914 world. Revolutions in feeling on this scale are as irreversible as changes in the tectonic plates of continents, and this one has certainly not been reversed. Thus, for example, in 1987, it is an *astounding triumph* for the President and Colonel North if they merely escape exemplary punishment at the hands of the rulers of the country for doing something which, before 1967, they would have been thought negligent of their duty if they had not done.

In 1987, as in 1967, the rulers of the free world are professors, graduates, and students of morally—and intellectually—ruinous universities, who read and write the New York *Times*, the *Guardian* in Britain, and the Sydney *Morning Herald* in Australia, and who control the content of local television. Many of these people despise those organs of publicity as being hopelessly reactionary. Still, they and their publicity organs are really of the same religion.

THE substance of this religion is as follows. The world—or rather, the free world (for this religion has nothing to say about any other)—is one huge festering mass of wrongs: wrongs against native populations, racial minorities, women, children, animals, the environment, etc., all perpetrated by men, whites, parents, developers, etc.; wrongs deep and immemorial, wrongs inevitable in the past no doubt, but inexcusable now. *All these wrongs must be righted now.* We are free to do it, and ought not wrongs to be righted? Indeed (such is the logic of utopianism), the *more* inevitable a wrong was in the past, the more imperative it is that it be righted in the present.

You see the metaphysical gulf which this religion implies, between the past, on the one hand, and the present and future, on the other; and in particular between all past human beings and *Us*, the enlightened ones of the present. *They* were all subject to Necessity, but We are Free. They lived under Nature, We live under Grace. They were not agents at all but mere patients, while We are pure agents and not patients at all. They, in darkness, could not but do the wrongs they did, but We, in the light, are free to right those wrongs.

The absurdity of this utopianism is only, of course, the absurdity of a Clarence Darrow defense

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writ large. "Your Honor, when my client shot the bank clerk, he was simply the helpless victim of his circumstances, his upbringing [etc.], exactly as the unfortunate bank clerk was. But you and I, Your Honor, are not: we are free, and should exercise this freedom, not to punish my client, but to acquit and reform him."

What can one say of a religion so absurd, except that it is absurd? After all, the parents who brought up the bank robber had parents themselves; so if their offspring was never a free agent, neither were they. If bank robbers are helpless victims of circumstances, so are judges who punish them; if the judges are free, so are the bank robbers. All human beings, at whatever time, live under the same Nature, or the same Grace. To imagine that there was Necessity for Them then, but that there is Freedom for Us now, is to sever human life and history into two utterly discontinuous parts: a severance to which nothing corresponds, or could correspond, in reality.

But this religion, unlike some others, is even more dangerous than it is absurd. For it licenses its devotees, or rather it actually requires them, to satisfy their "hunger and thirst after righteousness," regardless of the possibility that their actions will have unforeseen and undesirable consequences. Indeed, it actually makes a virtue of recklessness: *fiat iustitia ruat caelum*, "Let justice triumph though the heavens fall." Yet one of the most certain lessons of life is that our actions very often have unforeseen and unwelcome consequences, even, or rather especially, when they are well-intentioned.

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Beyond Revisionism

THE LONG PEACE: INQUIRIES INTO THE HISTORY OF THE COLD WAR. By JOHN LEWIS GADDIS. *Oxford University Press. 332 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DONALD KAGAN

IN THE spectrum of historians writing about the cold war, John Lewis Gaddis belongs in the category of post-revisionists. The revisionists, mainly in the 1960's, challenged the widespread Western view attributing the origins and development of the cold war chiefly to the expansive actions and ambitions of the Soviet Union and the attempt of the U.S. and its allies to stop and contain that expansion. The revisionists attacked that consensus from the Left, excusing the Soviet Union's behavior as coming from a natural and justified sense of insecurity and blaming the U.S. for misunderstanding Soviet fears, for acting not in defense of freedom but in pursuit of its own economic interests, from an inordinate and irrational fear of Communism, and, in some cases, from an aggressive imperialism of its own, inherent in capitalist societies.

Gaddis, one of the first post-revisionists, is also one of the ablest and most influential. His first book, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), was a sensible and scholarly examination of the issues raised by the revisionists which for the most part refuted and rejected their interpretations. His subsequent works have placed him near the center of a newly emerging consensus that seems to take an impartial position between the two antagonistic "superpowers," seeking to understand the position of each and willing to criticize both. His latest book is a collection of essays, most of them occasional pieces written for conferences, that provides a good opportunity for examining the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach in the hands of one of its abler practitioners.

Gaddis is a sober and hard-working professional who has read all the scholarly literature and has worked with the primary sources. As the Western nations, especially the U.S., have made new historical evidence available, he has examined it and used the results to answer some interesting and important questions. Thus he finds unsupported by evidence the charges of the revisionists that the U.S. feigned alarm at Soviet action soon after the war as an excuse for intervention, expansion, and hegemony. In fact the threat posed by the Soviets had been seen earlier, and its dangers felt far more urgently, by the free nations of Europe. Their chief concern was to get the Americans to take the lead in stopping it. The U.S. did not press itself upon unwilling allies but was eagerly invited to extend its involvement and influences. If American actions can be called expansion, this was "expansion by invitation." Far from seeking to establish a sphere of influence in Western Europe, as George Kennan advised it to do soon after the war, the U.S. tried hard to establish an independent set of free, European nations that could and would defend themselves and permit the Americans to reduce their involvement.

Why did the attempt fail? Gaddis's answer is sensible and convincing:

> The reason, almost certainly, is that the Europeans themselves did not want it. Confronted by what they perceived to be a malevolent challenge to the balance of power from the East, they set about inviting in a more benign form of countervailing power from the West rather than undertake the costly, protracted, and problematic process of rebuilding their own. The United States, with some reluctance, went along.

Perhaps the most interesting question illuminated by the availability of new evidence concerns the American attitude toward the Communist world. The traditional view is that American statesmen always looked on the Communist movement in the world as a unit and failed to exploit the real divisions among Communist nations in the interests of the United States. Gaddis, on the contrary, suggests that "despite what they said in public, American policy-makers at no point during the postwar era actually believed in the existence of an international Communist monolith." He sees the Eisenhower administration as seeking to create a "wedge through pressure," particularly between the Soviet Union and China. The hard line taken on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, for example, was not merely a response to domestic political pressure but also was meant "to undermine the relationship between Moscow and Beijing." Nixon's later opening to China is seen as a continuation of the earlier policy, where "a public policy of hard-line anti-Communism created greater opportunities for exploiting differences within the Communist world than did less rigid ideological stances."

SUCH interpretations are well-argued and persuasive, but too much of this sort of thing will earn a post-revisionist scholar a reputation as a cold warrior. To avoid such a stigma requires a considerable effort to look at matters from the Soviet side, and such efforts are not lacking in these essays. Even while conceding that Americans' fear of "Soviet and/or Communist expansionism" has been genuine, Gaddis says that "Fear, after all, can be genuine without being rational. And as Sigmund Freud once pointed out, even paranoids can have real enemies." But nothing in

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these essays or anywhere else shows that American fears—and those of many others—have been unfounded. With Soviet intentions unknown and unlikely ever to be documented, why should Americans be thought insane, especially since Gaddis more than once calls their reactions to the perceived danger sensible and restrained?

Much of the revisionist case for the absence of Soviet evil intentions rests on the fact that the Soviets never did invade Western Europe or other places, nor did Communist parties in the West undertake revolutions. In the same spirit, Gaddis cites with approval the view that "The security of nations now rests . . . not so much on the exertions they themselves make, but on the restraint exhibited by their adversaries." But what has created that restraint (such as it is) is precisely exertions like the Marshall Plan, NATO, nuclear weapons, and the demonstrated capacity and will to make use of such devices. The measures taken to achieve deterrence and containment of Soviet ambition tend to be ignored in analyses like Gaddis's and their results taken for granted.

The last essay in this collection, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International Systems," presents Gaddis's current understanding of developments since 1945. Here he argues, contrary to conventional thinking among theorists of international relations, that the "bipolar" system may in fact be more stable than the "multipolar" alternative, because it happens to reflect the realities of power. The distance between the two great powers, their relative lack of mutual communication and interdependence, may, paradoxically, be a force for stability. The presence of nuclear weapons has had a sobering effect on statesmen on each side. Technological innovation, by permitting mutual surveillance, has also had a stabilizing effect. Ideological hostilities have modified and yielded to the practical needs of mutual survival. Thus, the period 1945-87 might better be seen as one of "Long Peace" than of cold war.

Gaddis is attracted by ideas arising from game theory to help explain why the "Long Peace" evolved and continues and what is needed to preserve it. The problem with this approach, as with the "evenhanded" analysis of the cold war, is that it treats all players as fundamentally the same and thereby loses touch with reality. The United States and the Soviet Union not only have very different political and constitutional systems and moral attitudes; more to the point, they have had quite different goals. The Soviets have wanted to change the balance of power in the world in their favor, while the United States has tried to maintain the status quo as much as possible. To preach, therefore, as Gaddis does, that stability requires "a sense of caution, maturity, and responsibility on both sides," is pointless if one side wants not stability but change. In those circumstances, stability must require that the nation seeking it should be strong and determined enough to deter reckless actions by the dissatisfied power. Up to now the United States has been willing to pay the price. Whether it will continue to do so will determine if the "Long Peace" will persist.

Fascist Italy & the Jews

THE ITALIANS AND THE HOLOCAUST: PERSECUTION, RESCUE, AND SURVIVAL. By SUSAN ZUCCOTTI. *Basic Books. 334 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by FURIO COLOMBO

WHEN I went back to school in Turin after World War II, I learned that most of my teachers had been members of the resistance, participants in the anti-fascist network which suffered many losses and supplied heroes and legends to my generation of young Italians. We did not have to learn from

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them what fascism was—how the Italian alliance with Germany had deteriorated into total submission and Nazi occupation of the country. But we did learn a great deal about the lore of the resistance movement, and were enchanted and exhilarated by it. As far as the Jews were concerned, we were told that they too had undergone "the persecutions" (as they were called) of the fascist period, but our teachers had no desire to pursue the subject any further. The only event connected to the war that had any clarity or vividness was the fascist/anti-fascist struggle.

Later on I discovered that not all my teachers were born heroes, that some of them had had a life before anti-fascism and the resistance. During that earlier life they had been members of the fascist party and had sometimes even been carried away by the rhetoric of the moment. More than one had published articles in support of the 1938 racial laws, modeled on those of the Third Reich, which excluded the Jews from Italian life; others had limited themselves to a few phrases inserted here and there in articles on other subjects—just to get published perhaps or to avoid calling attention to themselves. Still others added their names to one or another of the manifestoes on racial matters issued during this period.

In any case, whatever their past sins, most of these people did behave honorably later on, risking their lives in the resistance, refusing to yield even when all seemed lost (the winter of 1944), displaying bravery when captured. A few ended up in Buchenwald or Auschwitz as "political" prisoners and brought these sinister names home with them when they returned, but —here again—only as one more part of the resistance saga.

Both then and during the three decades following the war, there seemed to be some sort of tacit agreement in effect to avoid mentioning the Holocaust, either in its general or in its specifically Italian aspect. The subject was not taught in the schools, and never really addressed in public. There were of course plenty of noble movies about the Nazis' sinister obsession with the Jewish people, and there were splendid novels about Jews in wartime Italy like Giorgio Bassani's *The Garden of the Finzi-Contini*, but when the subject did come into focus in the Italian mind, the tendency was to blame everything that had happened on the Germans.

Years later, *The Garden of the Finzi-Contini* was made into a touching film by the Italian director Vittorio De Sica. After the film opened, I had occasion to remark to De Sica that I had once seen a photograph of him during the war, running happily down an empty street in Rome, holding hands with the beautiful blonde actress Maria Mercader. The photograph had been taken in the winter of 1944, exactly the period in which the protagonists of Bassani's novel were arrested and deported, the same winter De Sica was to reconstruct so beautifully in his film almost thirty years later. I asked De Sica in the course of our conversation whether he was aware of the coincidence. He replied that he had never been happy in Rome during that terrible year, and reminded me that actors smile out of a sense of duty, and that he had been close to the resistance, which was true.

De Sica, like so many other Italian intellectuals, politicians, writers, and teachers, did not see the point. Like everyone else, he felt cleansed and absolved of any earlier wrongdoing by the great wave of anti-fascist commitment which swept Italy during the German occupation, and by its victorious outcome. Italian fascism had been crushed after all not only by the oncoming Allied troops, but also by Italians themselves, serving passionately and selflessly with the partisans and in other underground units. Indeed, when the war ended in 1945 these Italian anti-fascists were far more extreme than the Allies in their determination to end that period of Italian history, once and for all. Unfortunately, however, in sweeping away all traces of fascism, they also swept from memory every trace of what had happened to Italy's Jews during the fascist era.

Thus, with all the avenues, piazzas, and schools named after the martyrs and heroes of the resistance in Italy today, there is nothing to remind the postwar generation that there were once anti-Jewish laws on the books, and that thousands of Italian Jews, children included, fell victim to them. Nor for that matter is there any reminder that there were once courageous individuals who defied those laws—people like a barber in the village of Roncabello, for instance, who refused under torture to betray the Jewish families hidden in his village and whose name (up until recently at least) had never been heard of in Italy. Now at long last his story, along with that of many others like him, has been told in an important new book by Susan Zuccotti which attempts for the first time to investigate the Italian chapter of the Holocaust in a systematic and scholarly fashion.

GIVEN Italy's longstanding avoidance of the subject, one might have expected *The Italians and the Holocaust* to be an indictment of Italian behavior during the war years, but it is closer to the opposite. Much of the book is devoted to documenting the many ways in which ordinary Italians tried to help the Jews during the German occupation—to the point where Italy ranks with Denmark as the "best" nation in Europe during this dark period. At the same time, however, the author points out that the impressive number of good deeds performed by individual Italians cannot obscure the fact that something very troubling did happen in Italy, whose implications have never really been faced.

According to Miss Zuccotti, the majority of Italians never regarded themselves as enemies of the Jewish people and did not become informers for the Germans as so many others in occupied Europe did. They dealt with the racial statutes largely by ignoring them, or pretending not to understand what they entailed, and they did their best not to go along with German demands. If they did not actually help the Jews, they at least tried to do them no harm.

Within this benign but essentially passive majority of secret

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nonadherents, there also existed a much smaller group which went beyond mere good will, and it is this group which engages most of the author's attention. Working from a large body of data, much of which she has personally gathered and verified, she divides it into three categories.

The first category is made up of what she terms "altruistic people"—individuals (and sometimes whole families) who were willing to run any risk and overcome any obstacle, including the statistical probability of getting caught, in order to offer help where it was needed, and to thwart the machinery of persecution wherever possible. The behavior of these individuals—whose stories, taken together, add up to an amazing anthology of heroic deeds—is all the more striking in that the penalty for such activities (at least during the German occupation) was certain death.

Miss Zuccotti makes a number of interesting observations about the members of this group. She points out that apart from their exceptional altruism, the main thing they had in common was their outright rejection of racial doctrine—a rejection, incidentally, which does not seem to have been grounded in any specific political position, whether anti-fascist or otherwise. In other respects, they could hardly have been more diverse. They came from all walks of life, and from big cities as well as remote farming villages. Some were religious, others not; some had arrived at their actions via an "international" outlook on world events, others acted on the basis of a personal code of morality.

Most striking perhaps is the absence from this group of any "notables"—persons of influence or reputation who could be singled out for achievement in any area other than courageous behavior in a brutal time. Thus, there were many Catholic priests who supposedly acted with the permission of their "superiors," but none of those "superiors" is to be found here; nor are there any writers, thinkers, artists, or leading personalities.

Miss Zuccotti's second, and larger, category consists of people who did not play a role in the more daring rescue operations (the smuggling of refugees across enemy borders, the devising and coordination of intricate escape plans), but who did offer support to the Jews on a day-to-day, continuing basis. In this category, made up of quite humble people who simply refused to accept the singling out and persecution of others, are to be found the poor couples with many children of their own who took in other children; the farmers who opened their houses to strangers seeking shelter; the entire villages which adopted fugitives and remained silent despite every kind of pressure from the authorities.

The "miracle" of Villa Emma is one of the many shining episodes Miss Zuccotti records in this connection: approximately one hundred Jewish children collected by Jewish organizations mainly from Croatia in the Balkans were pro-

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SEVENTY YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTION:

HAS THE SYSTEM SATISFIED THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE?

Guest Editor of the issue: G. R. Urban

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tected throughout the German occupation by a chain of local families in the countryside of Modena. Not a single person talked, not a single child was lost to the Germans during the entire episode.

The third and most surprising group described in the book, and perhaps the one uniquely Italian, is composed of bureaucrats, civil servants, military personnel, and fascist officials who extended themselves to help Jews despite the obvious risks this entailed to people like themselves in positions of formal accountability. Some of the incidents Miss Zuccotti reports in connection with this group amounted to actual insubordination—cases, for example, of commanding officers in the Italian army in France, Croatia, and Dalmatia who systematically refused to obey German orders to deliver Jews to the SS in territories controlled by Italians. More frequently, they involved the creation of deliberate bureaucratic confusion, so that orders received were somehow lost in the shuffle and never carried out.

Especially unexpected are the episodes involving fascist officials with some degree of power (such as heads of city or local administration) who helped to save lives by closing their eyes to certain activities, by dropping hints of impending danger so people could escape in time, sometimes even by providing false papers when needed. Yet they remained fascists and stayed on in their jobs. Of all the groups Miss Zuccotti describes, this last-named is the most puzzling of all, and the hardest to figure out from either a historical or a psychological vantage point. Perhaps it may best be understood within the context of the traditional Italian dislike of state authority.

THANKS to the collective efforts of the people Miss Zuccotti writes about here, the majority of Italian Jews and a substantial number of foreign Jews who sought shelter in Italy did survive. Yet curiously enough, the net effect of her carefully researched and scrupulously documented book is to make this period in Italian history less, rather than more, comprehensible.

Given the exceptional courage of some Italians, and the basic decency of most of the rest, the reader is left wondering how the racial storm could have erupted in the first place and how it could have been directed, as Miss Zuccotti reminds us, not against outsiders, but against a deeply-rooted minority loyal to the government which had not known discrimination for over two hundred years, and which had long-established ties in the military, the judiciary, and the professions. A prime minister with no past history of racial bias proposed the race laws, a king of Italy signed them, and they became an accepted national fact, setting in motion the machinery of destruction which produced at least part, if not all, of the required toll. The machinery was highly imperfect and often sabotaged, yet it did lead to arrests, deportations, and thousands of deaths.

Miss Zuccotti does try, by all the means at her disposal, to explain how this could have happened and why, but in a sense the explanation is not hers to make. Her book ends where a collective reexamination of the Italian past must begin; its merit is not in the answering but in the raising of questions. By documenting both the glories and the national disgrace of this period—the wholesale failure of the Italian elite to protest the racial laws while there was still time to avert the catastrophe—her book compels Italians to look more deeply into the past than they have as yet been willing to do. In this it performs its most valuable service.

The Cotton Lords

ENTERPRISING ELITE: THE BOSTON ASSOCIATES AND THE WORLD THEY MADE. By ROBERT F. DALZELL, JR. *Harvard University Press. 320 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by CARTER COOPER

TO ANYONE familiar with recent trends in the field of social history, with its disdain for traditional literary sources, its self-conscious determination to rewrite history "from the bottom up," and its disregard for great men, great events, and great ideas, this book must come as a refreshing surprise. Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., who teaches American history at Williams College and is the author previously of *Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, 1843-1852*, has here done a study of the Boston Associates, a group of 19th-century captains of commerce, which respects their solid achievements and examines with an appropriate measure of dispassion and seriousness the contribution they made to American industry and American culture.

In 1813 this group of nearly eighty merchants with backgrounds in maritime commerce founded the first modern factory in the United States at Waltham, Massachusetts. They established a revolutionary new process for the manufacture of cotton textiles (appropriately called the "Waltham System"), according to which all aspects of production, including the provision of capital, the recruitment of labor, the purchase of supplies, and the marketing of the finished product were combined in one vast operation. The early success of Waltham was followed by similar industrial enterprises at Lowell, and later at Lawrence and Chicopee, Massachusetts; and at Manchester, New Hampshire, all planned and run by the Associates. By 1850 the Associates had transformed Massachusetts from a sleepy agrarian society into the most industrialized region of the globe outside of Great Britain.

THE story of the factories at Waltham and Lowell is a reminder that America's first brush with mechanical production was not so harsh as is often assumed, and certainly did not entail the foul slums, discontented workers, and roving bands of thieves and beggars that had accompanied the introduction of cotton mills in England. Working conditions at the American mills were, by the standards of the day, relatively pleasant. The factory towns were clean and prosperous. There was little crime. Foreign visitors like Charles Dickens, who saw the mills on his tour of America in the early 1840's, came away

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impressed with the superiority of the American setup to its European counterpart.

The Waltham-Lowell system, as Dalzell establishes, was more than a new method of production. It was, rather, a deliberate attempt by a coterie of businessmen to build a new order, in service to their small-town ideal of social harmony and bourgeois virtue. In the vacant stretch of territory they appropriated at Waltham, the Associates built a city that juxtaposed enormous, machine-crammed factories with the familiar settings of an agrarian past. Thus, the industrial complexes they constructed for their workers resembled small rural academies, with attractive collegiate buildings laid out in loose quadrangles. Around the mills the Associates built, at considerable detriment to the size of their profits, dormitories, churches, and libraries, modeled on the familiar pattern of New England towns. Waltham, Lowell, and Lawrence were entirely the product of their creators' curiously homey and expansive imaginations: white-picket-fence Brasilias.

At Lowell, the Associates encouraged the workers to read and educate themselves, and even set up a literary magazine for and by them. Thrift was also encouraged by the town builders; by 1842, $100,000 of the workers' hard-earned wages rested in the local savings bank. (Cash wages were themselves an unusual practice in a day when labor was often exchanged for sacks of potato or flour.) The Associates similarly sought to instill in their workers a lively sense of the importance of industry, sobriety, and self-reliance.

"Experience has taught me that manufacturers are now as necessary to our independence as to our comfort," Thomas Jefferson had written to a Boston friend in 1816, but in fact until the late 1820's many Americans viewed the prospect of industrialization with unqualified fear. Perhaps the Associates' chief claim on posterity lies in their extraordinary ability to calm these fears by their words and deeds. By 1840 they had shown that industrialization could succeed in America, and had convinced Boston's commercial elite, the most obstinate opponents of manufacturing, to invest their own money in the mills.

The Waltham-Lowell system, however, proved to be a unique experiment, and Lowell itself, after 1850, was increasingly left to its own devices as the Associates moved into other businesses. At Lawrence, a five-story mill collapsed on January 10, 1860, killing 88 people and burying hundreds of workers in the debris. An investigation revealed that the accident could easily have been prevented if the mill owners had installed new iron columns as had been recommended six years earlier. The accident marked the death of the old system.

BY THE middle of the century the Boston Associates were in a somewhat peculiar position. They had become a cohesive group (although remaining open to men of talent, regardless of background), bound together by ties of marriage as well as finance. Clustered together in one area of Boston, Beacon Hill, they had adopted a style of life that, while modest, nevertheless set them apart and above other Bostonians. For the first time, in other words, America had produced what was beginning to look like, and indeed was being attacked as, an industrial upper class, the "Cotton Lords." Dalzell shows us this new class of industrialists fighting a rearguard action against an eager pack of detractors.

The Boston merchants responded to criticisms of their privilege by deliberately shunning conspicuous display. Amos Lawrence, a founding Associate, warned, "An idler, who feels that he has no responsibilities can find no comfort in staying here [in Boston]. We have not enough such to make up a society. We are literally all working men." The Associates prided themselves on possessing in full the same traditional bourgeois virtues they sought to instill in their mill workers. This gentlemanly code was at once self-serving and beneficial to the public—and at times baldly hypocritical. Thus, the Associates attempted to forestall economic developments that threatened their

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power and privilege, and even to block public-works projects that were clearly in the public interest but that imperiled their monopoly.

STILL, if the merchants did not always live up to their own standards, at least they attempted, some of them earnestly, to articulate and to live by a code of what would once have been called "republican" virtue. One aspect of that virtue is especially remarkable. With the fortunes they made in the cotton texile business, the Associates went on to establish Boston's great public institutions. They endowed the largest private library in America, the Athenaeum, and built the city's public-library system. Harvard, under their sponsorship, became a great modern university. Another product of their largesse was the Massachusetts General Hospital, an institution at the forefront of medical research, and a place where anesthesia was used successfully in surgery for the first time in America. The Perkins Institute for the Blind and McLeans mental hospital, also founded by the textile merchants, set new standards for the humane treatment of patients.

In all this the endeavors of the Boston Associates formed a part of a vaster project in which, it must sometimes have seemed, all Boston was engaged, and which centered on the quasi-religious expectations attending the spread of knowledge. Boston had appointed itself America's great teacher. Merchant families subsidized free public-lecture series on such varied topics as the Bible, archeology, botany, chemistry, and history. Tens of thousands of Bostonians, nearly a fifth of the city's population, flocked to activities that had about them the aura of imminent salvation.

Dalzell does not properly acknowledge or credit this spiritual dimension of the Boston Associates' enterprise, but one cannot in fact understand the Waltham-Lowell system apart from the religious fever that had come upon the city. The Associates were, almost to a man, influenced by the newly ascendant creed of Unitarianism, and by a sensibility that combined the old puritan code of morality with a more sympathetic and expectant view of the ability of man to work marvels on earth. By focusing more narrowly on the economic motives of the Boston merchants Dalzell misses these other, perhaps more telling, propulsions to action.

CAREFUL to remain within his self-imposed limits in narrating the story of the Associates, Dalzell also avoids drawing that story into the context of today. Nevertheless, aspects of the Associates' creed continue to compel our attention. The Associates and their descendants were rich men, almost an aristocracy, who even when their privileges had become hereditary continued to subscribe to a middle-class ethos. Their attempt, at Lowell and in Boston, to spread this ethos to all segments of the population provides a fine illustration of the basically democratic nature of the bourgeois vision. As Gertrude Himmelfarb has pointed out, in the 19th century "middle-class" virtues were widely regarded as accessible to anyone with the will to acquire and adhere to them. No special breeding, status, or even valor was required.

True, for every Bostonian who believed in spreading knowledge and self-discipline to the average man, there was another member of the older Boston elite who denigrated the self-made man and looked to a (hereditary) class of the educated as the great hope of society. Dalzell unfortunately fails to capture the abiding tensions between democratic and anti-democratic enthusiasms within the American elite at large, yet these tensions, in suitably updated form, are fully discernible within today's very different American elites as well, and now as then it would be difficult to say that the democratic impulse is always and everywhere the dominant one.

Whatever the limitations of Dalzell's study, however, he does advance credible motives for the Boston Associates' actions, and conveys in a mass of arresting detail that quintessentially American mixture of self-interest and public-spiritedness that together propelled the Cotton Lords, with their peculiarly bourgeois creed of social responsibility, into textile manufacturing, banking, politics—and philanthropy.

Organization Man

LOOKING FORWARD. By GEORGE BUSH with VICTOR GOLD. *Doubleday. 270 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE jacket copy of *Looking Forward* promises "the first autobiography written by a Vice President while still in office." That is not a reason to read it, of course; a better reason is the fact that, despite a gift for the maladroit remark and the presence of a host of rivals, George Bush is still—as he has been for seven years—the odds-on choice to win the first post-Reagan Republican presidential nomination. "In a remarkably revealing self-portrait," the jacket continues, Bush "answers all the questions. . . ." The second half of that sentence is nonsense; no politician ever answers all the questions if he can help it, and certainly not in a campaign book. But if read carefully, the self-portrait in *Looking Forward* is revealing.

Victor Gold, a veteran of two Bush campaigns, is listed as collaborator, or co-author. Gold, who practices journalism between elections, has one of the liveliest and most distinctive voices in American political writing today; his book on the 1976 campaign, *PR as in President,* was a farcical masterpiece. The stolidity of the prose in *Looking Forward* persuades me that the Vice President's contribution to the project was substantial.

The book touches on all the most important events and phases of Bush's life. He was born in 1924 into a successful family; his father, Prescott Bush, would become a partner in Brown Brothers Harriman, and a Senator from Connecticut. Six months after Pearl Harbor, on his eighteenth birthday, George joined the Navy, and served in the

RICHARD BROOKHISER *is a senior editor of* National Review *and the author of* The Outside Story: How Democrats and Republicans Reelected Ronald Reagan.

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Legitimacy & Force

(IN TWO VOLUMES)

STATE PAPERS AND CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

Legitimacy and Force, Volumes One and Two are the state papers of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The volumes feature all of the ambassador's UN and congressional testimonies, addresses, speeches and statements and a broad selection of speeches on international affairs and human rights. Together they present a lucid and comprehensive account of the position of one of America's most controversial UN representatives.

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Pacific as a pilot. He went to Yale, where he played baseball and earned a Phi Beta Kappa key. He began his first career, in the oil business, as an equipment clerk in the firm of a family friend, and ended it at the head of a drilling company which pioneered off-shore rigs.

Bush's second career began when he agreed in 1962 to become chairman of the Republican party in Harris County, Texas (which includes Houston). He made two successful runs for the House of Representatives (in 1966 and 1968), bracketed by two unsuccessful shots at the Senate (in 1964 and 1970). Then began the flurry of appointments which have so thickened his résumé: ambassador to the United Nations (1971), chairman of the Republican National Committee (1973), chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in Peking (1974), Director of Central Intelligence (1976). Looking about him as the Carter administration rattled down the homestretch, he saw Republican challengers "whose qualifications were no better than mine and whose experience in government and business wasn't as extensive." In 1979, he traveled a quarter of a million miles and attended 850 Republican political events. His industry won him the Iowa caucuses and, ultimately, the position he holds today.

None of this gets probed in great depth here; some sections of the book barely skim the surface. In his account of his time at the CIA, for instance, Bush does not even mention one of the most important episodes, the convening of the "B-team": a group of outside experts asked to make an independent estimate of Soviet strength, which turned out to be considerably gloomier than what the Agency had been giving. Many memoirs make up for skimpy history with rich storytelling; not this one. There are a few exceptions, one of them strangely powerful: at Leonid Brezhnev's funeral, Bush found himself with a clear view of the "grieving widow approach[ing] Brezhnev's coffin to say her last farewells. She looked down and then, in an unmistakable gesture, leaned forward to make the sign of the cross over her husband's body. I was stunned." Not stunned enough, however, to put the story some place better than in a footnote.

Looking Forward covers two aspects of Bush's life in a useful way. The account of his service in the Navy should dispel the "wimp factor." Bush flew 58 combat missions in the northern Pacific and the Philippines. On one bombing run over Chichi Jima in the Bonin Islands, though enemy gunners found his plane, he hit his target and bailed out over water, for which he won a Distinguished Flying Cross. It is not fashionable to notice such things, but George Bush was a brave young man.

Those who believe that athletics is destiny will study the pages on Yale baseball. Yale had a good team—it went twice to the College World Series—and Bush, who played first base, was a strong fielder. His hitting, however, prompted a friendly letter from the head groundskeeper. " 'After watching you play since the season started, I am convinced the reason you are not getting more hits is because you do not take a real cut at the ball. . . . I notice at the plate you are not going after any bad balls, and with the good eye which you have, I would suggest that the above be tried out.' " Bush took the advice. "It didn't get me a pro contract, but it did bring my batting average up to a respectable .280."

Tidbits aside, the most important service Bush's book performs is one of placement. *Looking Forward* locates him in his class, and suggests his, and its, strengths and limitations.

During the 1980 Republican nomination battle, there was a good deal of talk from Reagan boosters, eager to encourage a "populist" trend in the party, about Bush's "preppiness" and related vices. They missed an important distinction. Bush belongs to the upper class but not to the uppermost class, what Paul Fussell calls "top-out-of-sight." Though he was born in Milton, Massachusetts and raised in Greenwich, Connecticut, his parents' roots were in the Midwest—Columbus, Ohio, and St. Louis; both were children of businessmen. Prescott Bush settled in New England as the last stop in a peripatetic career as a manager. Though he ended up in Brown Brothers Harriman, he was not a Harriman. Similarly, when George went to Texas to make his nut, it was not an affectation of the idle; he was doing what his father had done. Bush's background thus lacks any organic relation to the trust-fund liberalism—called generous by its friends, feckless by its enemies—of the great American *rentiers*: Roosevelt, Rockefeller, the Kennedy brothers. There is instead still a discernible connection to the subsoil of Midwestern strivers which produced such Republicans as Wendell Willkie and Thomas Dewey.

One is accordingly more disposed than otherwise to credit such biographical boilerplate as: "Dad believed in the old Ben Franklin copybook maxims . . . he and my mother embodied the Puritan ethic, in the best sense of the term." Mrs. Prescott Bush certainly appears to have been a no-nonsense woman. " 'You're talking about yourself too much, George,' she told me after reading a news report covering one of my campaign speeches. I pointed out that as a candidate, I was expected to tell voters something about my qualifications. She thought about that a moment, then reluctantly conceded. 'Well, I understand that,' she said, 'but try to restrain yourself.' "

He brought this earnest style to the many jobs he undertook. The main impression one forms of all those glittering appointive posts is that they involved a lot of dutiful slogging. He presided over the Republican National Committee as Watergate turned from a "caper" into a catastrophe; he came to the CIA at the mid-70's nadir of its reputation. His time at the UN and in Peking was clouded by Henry Kissinger's tight control of Chinese-American relations. Bush found himself struggling in New York to keep Taiwan in the UN, even as the White House was announcing Nixon's China trip. Four years later, Kissinger, then Secretary of State, told him quite frankly that

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he was walking into a supporting role at the liaison office in Peking. "There'll be some substantive work from time to time, but for the most part you'll be bored beyond belief."

THESE, one feels, were proper niches for a man of Bush's temperament and station—the tough job, the long haul, the thankless task. Is he good for anything more? The question arises because he so often seems, on the evidence of his career and this book, to define problems as he defines his duties: in organizational and operational terms. At times, Bush's pragmatism was a pragmatic maneuver, adopted to defuse conflict. When he took on the chairmanship of the Harris County GOP, he found a party split between members of the John Birch Society, who loathed him, and normal people. "There was no point trying to resolve the deep ideological differences in the membership," Bush writes, "so I shifted the emphasis to the nuts-and-bolts of building the party organization."

But the organizational approach crops up so often that it must be a character trait. In a concluding self-interview, Bush asks himself for thoughts about the CIA and the UN. His mind turns to flow charts —he suggests a joint congressional oversight committee on intelligence, and recommends that the Director of Central Intelligence and the UN ambassador both be deprived of their cabinet rank—and to nothing else.

A more significant instance comes as he recalls the moment in August 1974 when he and other Republican leaders decided that Richard Nixon had to go. "My letter asking him to resign was written," Bush explains, "because a political party and the country [are] bigger and more important than any one person, even a President." The country, to be sure; any good republican would say that. But Bush, the Republican, adds *the party*—adds it, and lives by it.

Bush's virtues are underappreciated by verbalists and theorizers. There are more things in heaven and earth than in our political philosophy; they include loyalty, steadfastness, and a determination to get the job done. But Bush is reluctant to go beyond them. Phrases like "new ideas" and "vision" strike him as irritating buzz-words. "*Vision of the future*? Why would anyone run for President of the United States *without* a comprehensive view of the world . . . or . . . deep convictions about the course the country needs to take?" In most politicians' mouths, they are indeed buzz-words. But most politicians should not be President, and many of them contribute nothing to the political debate. That may be why, on many issues, the Republican party has taken inspiration, not from career businessmen or politicos, but from veterans of such non-mainstream places as Hollywood, the Buffalo Bills, and the Georgetown University faculty.

It is remarkable that, in a book entitled *Looking Forward,* the author never once does so. "Would you like to talk about your program for the decade of the 1990's?" Bush asks himself in the last chapter. "I'll have a lot to say about that," he replies, "after I become a formal candidate." He has had his chance, since his announcement last October; and his chance will probably continue at least until next November. But however much he says, it is likely to leave many of those inclined to support him unsatisfied.

Mooning Over Miami

MIAMI: THE CITY OF THE FUTURE. By T.D. ALLMAN. *Atlantic Monthly Press. 394 pp. $22.50.*

MIAMI. By JOAN DIDION. *Simon & Schuster. 238 pp. $17.95.*

GOING TO MIAMI: EXILES, TOURISTS, AND REFUGEES IN THE NEW AMERICA. By DAVID RIEFF. *Little, Brown. 230 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE RUSSELL

MIAMI is the Hong Kong of the Americas, a dazzling, cash-rich entrepôt alongside an alien and profitable presence, the baffling diversity that we prefer to

GEORGE RUSSELL *is a senior editor of* Time *and a former chief of its South American bureau.*

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know, simply, as Latin America and the Caribbean. Like Hong Kong, Miami shows all the characteristics of a spectacularly fortuitous entrepreneurial accident: dizzying development, rampant speculation, immense conspicuous wealth and corruption—violence. Beneath it all are the tectonic plates of difference—language, comportment, custom, systems of production—that call forth exchange. Even in the matter of drugs there is a similarity between the two sites: cocaine and marijuana, opium. The major distinction is that while Hong Kong was an exchange kiosk so very remote from Britain, Miami is one of the main doorways to the U.S. And, of course, there is the fact that in Miami, the drugs flow the other way than they did 130 years ago in Asia.

The geographical singularity of Miami is the distinction that really matters, especially in the 80's. Miami, thriving international hub, Cuban immigrant bastion, drug capital, is both the end and the beginning of the line where the U.S. is concerned, a problematical place in a sprawling republic of immigrants, in which the body politic and the territory have both grown most rapidly through physical incorporation. On the other side of Miami is the so-far unincorporable, and thus, among other things, the point at which U.S. foreign policy ceases to be an abstraction.

Most of U.S. foreign policy in the Western hemisphere is economics, and in Miami, that is no abstraction, either. Miami is rich, a condition often, and erroneously, attributed to drug money. To be sure, drug money plays a substantial role in that palmy, pastel-hued opulence, but other factors are considerably more important. (There are plenty of drugs in Marseilles, but most of the money goes elsewhere.) Miami's modern glamorized existence owes an enormous amount to OPEC, the rise of international oil prices, and the traditional recycling of Latin American loans and investment known as flight capital. Drug money that flows back into Miami is in itself a form of flight capital, moving through the incredibly intricate system of offshore financing—greatly ramified by OPEC and Latin debt—that Latin Americans have used for a long, long time to express lack of confidence in their domestic fiscal and social arrangements. There are other such havens in the hemisphere: Uruguay (the "Switzerland of the Americas"), Panama (in a little trouble at the moment), and perhaps every second Caribbean islet. Miami is the big one, and again, because of geography. It is here.

With money has come another in Miami's cyclical rounds of exuberance going back to the 20's and also, lately, an eponymous crime show on national television. All is closely linked: just as $20 per-barrel petroleum gave birth to *Dallas*, so the blossoming of flight capital helped to engender *Miami Vice*. Once again, Miami has proved to be a good location. TV has bestowed on Miami a sense of style, mood, and raffishness that formerly was bestowed on great American cities by writers like Damon Runyon, Ben Hecht, or Raymond Chandler. Well, TV has almost done that.

It becomes necessary to mention so trivial a thing as a cops-'n-robbers show in relation to Miami because without that series it would be be well-nigh impossible to unravel some of the reasons behind the sudden rivulet of books that have now spurted forth, with the intention of examining the city and its signifying relationship to the U.S. Each one makes at least one prolonged obeisance in the direction of Messrs. Crockett and Tubbs, the two detectives on *Miami Vice*. It almost seems as if the city has suddenly attracted a swarm of popcultural iconographers, each one of whom, in the French fashion, is seeking a subtext to the electronic images. They are intent on showing what Miami *means*.

Along the way, each author, in some fashion or other, also ponders the importance of the Latin threat. More specifically, the Cuban threat. A theme wending through all the books is a concern about Cuban-American economic assertiveness, growing political clout, and fervid anti-Communism. And behind that can be detected the more muted anxiety of one group contemplating another in the American crucible: are we about to be displaced? Are our values about to be outflanked? How do we assess the ultimate impact—on us—of these people?

In the small-d democratic folklore of America, those kinds of questions come from the mouths of Wasps pondering the arrival of sturdy pleb hordes on U.S. shores. And there has been plenty of that kind of uneasy bigotry in American history. But this time, many of the expressions of concern stem from a different group, the pop intelligentsia. There is much about Miami and its rising Cuban elite that gives this group pause. The city and its immigrant citizens are seen as both socially and politically conservative; they harbor a minority of right-wing political extremists; victims of Communism, they are strong supporters of other victims of Marxism-Leninism, like the Nicaraguan *contras*; they vote Republican. By these and other stripes, they seem to stand outside the traditional "assimilationist" immigrant constituencies whose mythology forms so much of the country's liberal-mainstream integument.

PERHAPS one of the clearest expositions of the process comes from the mouth of actor Edward James Olmos, one of the stars of, yes, *Miami Vice*. As Olmos puts it:

> It doesn't matter whether you're Anglo or Jewish or Polish or Cuban, every group thinks once they've got it made, the curtain will come down on the drama of America and they can settle down to the happy ending. Then, suddenly, new people start moving in. An America where the plot once seemed simple and safe now seems complex and dangerous because, just when you think you've got America mastered, it always starts renewing itself.

Olmos's down-to-earth view is perhaps the most cogent statement made in T.D. Allman's garrulous and often incoherent book, *Miami: The City of the Future*. Allman is a native Floridian laundered by Harvard and Oxford; his previous work, *Unmanifest Destiny*, was an

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extended diatribe against the racist, genocidal, imperialist policy of the United States toward Central America and the Caribbean since the beginning of time. Alongside his credentials as a *marxisante* intellectual, Allman reveals himself in his latest work to be a determinist of an even older school, intent on exposing what he calls "one of the oldest truths of America: the original sins of our national genesis pursue us wherever we go."

Allman holds to this view with great tenacity. It considerably clutters his other enterprise, which is to produce an epiphany about Miami as the embodiment of everything, good and bad, past, present, and above all future about America. "Miami *is* America," he writes. It is both the macrocosm and the microcosm. "Miami's not just its own invention. It's its own point of reference," he adds, a trifle confusingly. "Strange new shapes emerge under that sky as you get closer, beckoning like promises in a foreign language you'd like to learn."

As a journalist on the Miami scene, Allman tries to guide his readers to all the expected low spots: to a cocaine party at a wealthy local lawyer's house; to a club where Colombian gunmen take their girlfriends; to the city's 1980 Overtown racial explosion. His depiction of those scenes is uniformly maudlin. This, for example, from the 1980 riot: "But now there was no escape. . . . Even when you pressed the accelerator to the floor, the smoke, the rage, the terror pursued you. It was as though the darkest fantasies of the American soul had come true."

Heavy stuff. Was Allman there? It is occasionally a bit hard to tell. When leaving his cocaine bash, Allman says that his clothes were so heavily powdered with the stuff that it came away in clouds as he walked down the street. This seems a bit operatic; one wonders if cocaine also induces poetic license.

But the touring is merely by way of introduction to one of Allman's main points: that Miami is an assimilationist success story. Despite horror tales about criminal Cuban *marielitos* and Haitians washing ashore on local beaches, the true drama of Miami is that the Americanization of the city's Latins "is now in full flood." Latin immigration is no threat, "the integration forces have never been stronger." It is still, in Allman's view, the principal font of American virtue, the ability of the country to reinvent itself continually. As he puts it at one point: "The whole city is one vast, wonderful tribute to the fact that, in this part of the world, fantasy has the force of history."

Then the subtext emerges. Being an immigrant is not the problem; being an *American* is the problem. Gradually, Allman says, "I came to the conclusion that Miami also holds up a mirror to that strange American emptiness that always seems to pursue us no matter how many swamps we turn into cities of tomorrow." What is truly representative about Miami, he finally seems to say, is that here, as everywhere else in the country, one has an obligation to feel guilt: "the dark stratum of historical injustice that underlies the gleaming new Florida of today, to say nothing of the gleaming illusion of virtue triumphant that underlies so much of what we Americans do, build, and are."

Having opened up this notion, Allman concludes on a note of more or less complete incoherence. "Everywhere the world is growing more like Miami," he asserts, and within a few sentences is asking, "Does our capacity to create Fontainebleaus and TV series and cities bespeak a touch of the divine in human nature? Or are we more like marine insects?" Finally launching into a disquisition on quantum mechanics, Allman arrives at the 60's revelation that everything is interconnected. To the reader, at least, it has become clear that whatever other impact Miami has on America, it possesses a dangerous ability to disorganize certain minds.

For T.D. Allman, when he is not locked in a death struggle with ontology, Miami is America writ small. For Joan Didion, it is "a settlement of considerable interest, not exactly an American city as American cities have until recently been understood but a tropical capital: long on rumor, short on memory, overbuilt on the chimera of runaway money." As is her wont, Miss Didion finds much on the Miami scene to be unsettled about. The place is, above all, alien, and smoldering with social resentment. "The entire tone of the city, the way people looked and talked and met one another, was Cuban. The very image the city had begun presenting of itself . . . was that of prerevolutionary Havana, as perceived by Americans."

Joan Didion sees an apocalypse coming in Miami, and seems to relish the prospect. The heart of Miami's darkness is the right-wing Cuban, nurtured by Washington's equally dark geopolitical designs since 1960, and still a serpent alive in the community. Unlike Allman, she argues that Cubans, as opposed to other immigrant groups, live in *el exilio*, a revanchist and willfully foreign space outside America. Those who try to leave *el exilio*—by which she largely means arguing for an accommodation with the Castroite regime in Havana—run the risk of being killed by their peers. There is no doubt, in fact, that such killings have occurred, although one that Miss Didion dwells on occurred, if recollection serves, more than a decade ago.

Miss Didion has an equally dogmatic conception of Miami's Anglo community, which she finds laughably ignorant of the Cuban reality in its midst. There is considerable schoolgirl condescension in her tone as she announces portentously that "Cuban food was widely seen not as a minute variation on that eaten throughout both the Caribbean and the Mediterranean but as 'exotic' and full of garlic."

Behind that condescension, Miss Didion brandishes a sense of cultural relativism that is almost breathtaking:

> Americans, it is often said in Miami, will act always in their own interest, an indictment. Miami Cubans, by implicit contrast, take their stand on a higher ground, *la lucha* as a sacred abstraction, and any talk about "interests" or for that matter "agreements," remains alien to the local temperament, which is

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absolutist, and sacrificial, on the Spanish model.

Which is to say, on the Cuban model.

What Miss Didion seems most interested in doing, screenwriter-fashion, is confecting a portrait of ethnic menace. Miami is of less concern to her than her own mood, in which the ordinary becomes sinister, in which the hand of a nefarious right-wing conspiracy is subtly evident. Sometimes, her attempts to conjure a sinister relationship into existence topple over into outright ludicrousness. Thus, at one point, Miss Didion quotes Orlando Bosch, leader of the Miami-based Omega 77 anti-Castro terrorist group, as saying, "You have to fight violence with violence." Immediately after, she notes: "The same year, 1978, Richard Helms [who years previously had been the CIA director of operations when Bosch was given paramilitary training by the agency] said: 'When one government is trying to upset another government and the operation is successful, people get killed.'" Well, as they say, if that doesn't prove something, nothing will.

A word that recurs frequently in Miss Didion's accounts is "tropical." It is her euphemism for foreign, un-American. Describing the garb of upper-middle-class Cuban women in Miami, she observes, "there seemed to be a preference for strictest gray or black, but the effect remained perfectly lush, tropical, like a room full of perfectly groomed mangoes." These people, or so this feline and perfectly inept characterization seems to imply, do not belong here.

It is difficult to know if David Rieff would agree. His book looks at Miami from a different angle, that of the worldly New York litterateur. As such, it is more an attempt to strike an attitude than a serious bid to examine Miami, a point that Rieff concedes, sort of, in his introduction, when he labels his work a "book of impressions, not a work of investigative journalism."

Even before he reaches Miami, according to his diary-like account, Rieff is deeply involved with the question of how long people he meets have been in the country. On a dozen or so trips to New York area airports, he reports, "I encountered only three cabdrivers who were native-born Americans." This appears to have weighed on him. In Miami itself, there are additional ethnic realities: "As I walked aimlessly about, the predominant language seemed to be Spanish. Over the public-address system, flight announcements were given bilingually more as is done in San Juan, Puerto Rico, than in even so international a city as New York or so Hispanic a place as Los Angeles."

There is a great deal of this kind of wide-eyed silliness, enough to make one wonder whether Rieff had ever previously left his Manhattan apartment. "America may all look the same on television," he observes, "but it doesn't feel the same when one actually travels around; it only feels the same from the hotel room." But what is even more striking in this account is a sense of superiority which, if applied to any other ethnic group, might well draw a stern response from the Blank-American Defense Committee. Contemplating an editorial supplement in which Cuban businessmen and other luminaries (including Ronald Reagan) hail their community's achievements, Rieff notes:

> Amongst the older, better established ethnic groups, this desire [for self-promotion] is largely entertained by individuals. But for as cohesive a group as Cuban-Americans, the idea of some kind of collective celebrity—rather like a rock star with a million glitter-flecked heads—was not only natural, it was bound to be irresistible.

Further on he adds, "Given their phenomenal gift for legitimate business, it is fairly safe to assume that Cuban-Americans will eventually largely eschew crime just as Jewish-Americans did."

What, if anything, is Rieff's point? In part, it seems to be that Miami is not *Miami Vice*. Beyond that, he largely seems concerned to have it on the record that what exists in Miami has now been seen and judged by its betters.

Beyond Miami, beyond Cuba, beyond the latest bubbling of the American melting pot, there is an issue that all of these books raise. It is the questionable quality of some strands of American cultural observation.

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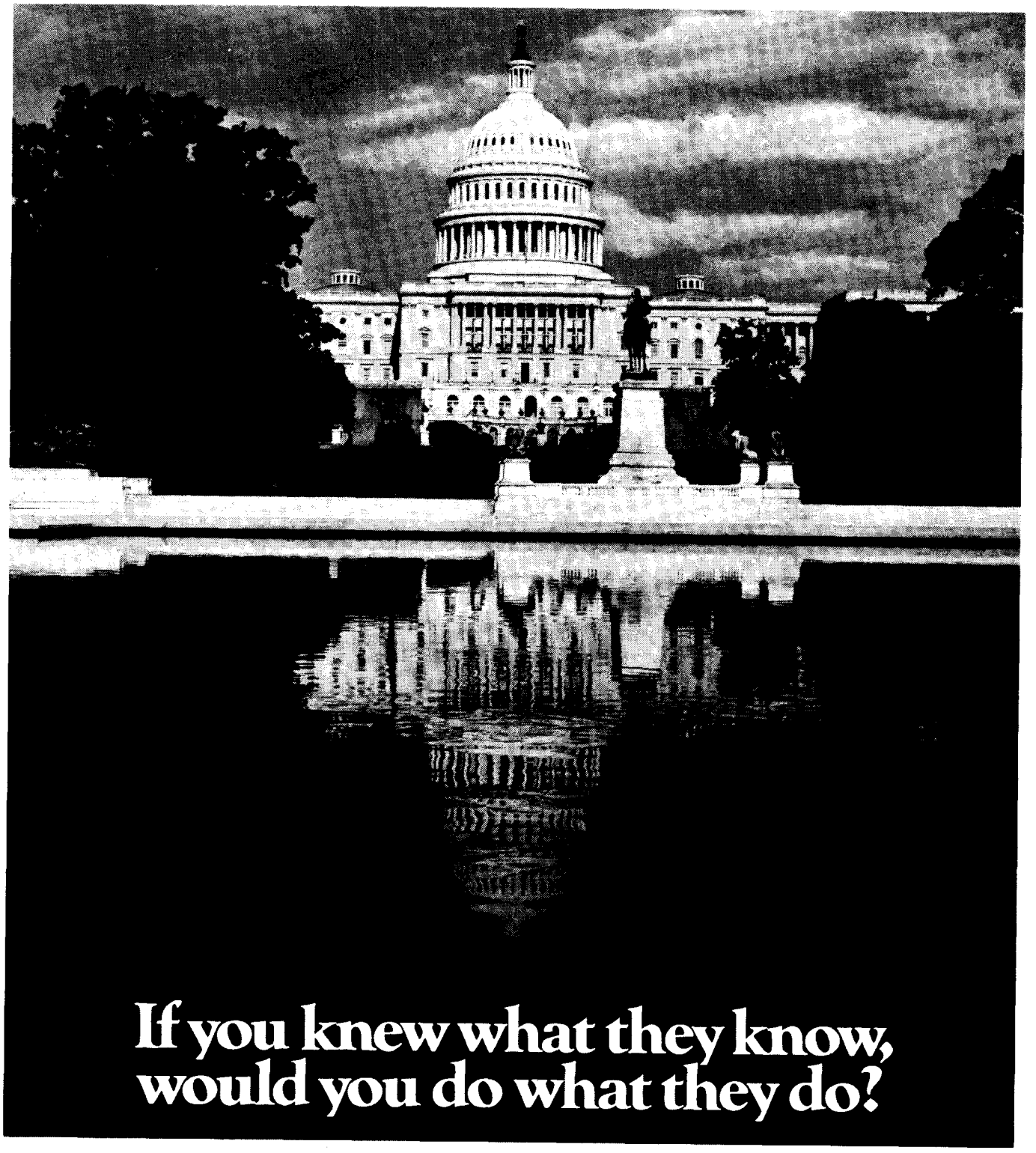

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